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Books for Thoughts.

Books for Thoughts.



BY

JAMES PEDDIE,

AUTHOR OF "ALEXANDER RAMAGE."

"To beguile the time, look like the time."

SHAKSPERE.

LONDON:

JAMES BLACKWOOD, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCLXI.

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Preliminary Words.

SPIRITUAL revelations it does contain, but the author does not certify to their unearthly origin ; it is not the legend of a woman with a nimbus, nor the particulars of a very fast color to rival the Magenta, nor the vocabulary of the talking fish, nor the diary of an ex-detective. It deals not with the birth-place of William Tell, the perpetual motion, nor the heart of Napoleon Bonaparte. It will neither expose to you the construction of M. Dumas' romances, nor the weakness of a certain satirical novelist. It is no answer to the poor law question ; it does not regulate the connection between the employer and the employed ; it will not interfere with the accumulation of the national debt.

It speaks, however, of things of some consequence to man, such as Paradise Found, and Satan in Council, and sketches out a few strange incidents of travel in different quarters of the globe, and holds up to light some of the peculiar features of this age.

It always tries to be amusing ; and if its possessors dig carefully underneath the surface they may find rich mines of ore, which the author does not guarantee to exist, although he has endeavored to set in a pleasing style the knowledge derived from some experience, a good deal of reading, and a little thought.

As regards style, one must keep up with the times, or the heavy surface swell will be leaving us leagues off. We must be robed in the latest fashion—everything for appearances ; what though our interior is base, and sometimes unclean, if our exterior is presentable ! The brushing of our hair is of infinitely more importance than the cultivation of our brain. A new neck-tie is superior to an original idea. Original idea, forsooth ! let the man who discovers one go hang himself for all the good it will do him—it will be adapted from the French, or abstracted from Ariosto or Homer, or have been kindly lent him by his neighbours. We must not pretend to be greater than our neighbours or they will destroy our character—if they can—and, if we should happen to have weak minds, drive us mad.

The author of "Hooks for Thoughts" has a sincere veneration for his neighbours, and jumps always into the latest fashion, so you must respect him and his work, ladies and gentlemen—he is one of yourselves.

But what about this name, you will ask. Well, you know names have no signification, and he might with perfect propriety have called it "The Mountain of a Million Suns," "Candle-light and Rush-light," or "Wait for the Wagon," but he preferred a simpler title than any of these, and this is the way "Hooks for Thoughts" arose into being. [As we write this, a young lady with such lovely brown curls leans over our shoulder and exclaims, "You naughty man! you never mean to put me in the book?"]

The author had an invitation to a ball, and was trying to fix on a name for his book before he went to dress for it, but his imagination refused to satisfy his reason on the point, and he was just giving it up in despair, when a young lady in evening costume threw open the door of his study and entered in a most excited manner.

"What is it?" he asked, "nothing wrong with baby? or is the house on fire?"

"No! what put these into your head? Do give over your thoughts, and look at the hook of my dress."

"Stop a moment! I have it!"

"What, the hook?"

"Yes, gipsy, the Hooks for Thoughts."

* * * * *

We will not detain you longer, ladies and gentlemen; the overture is over—we make our bow and retire—the curtain is drawn up, and the first scene that appears in view is *Paradise Found*.

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Books for Thoughts.

I.

Paradise Found.



CURIOUS things do take shape on earth. Adam's formation is certainly remarkable, but had his words and actions been carefully noted down by some inquiring Boswell, what a source of amazement we would possess, and the why and wherefore of the man's existence would have been lost sight of in watching the movement of the result.

The result—Adam and his wife Eve were expelled from Paradise, because the woman happened, like her fellow-sisters of the present day, to be too fond of not touchable things.

Since thorns and thistles began to spread themselves over man's pathway through life, and crime to assume the form of murder, philosophers and men of lesser mark have striven, but vainly, to reconstruct another paradise.

Some one told me t'other day that the Sultan was a philosopher, and had discovered a paradise in his ladies' boudoirs.

But this does not chime with the clock of truth, which points me to the principal events of his reign, and ticks out intended assassinations, plots revealed, subjects rebelling, and Russian campaign.

A philosopher ! a teacher of dancing as well.

His pleasures must be exceeded by his exquisite pains, and then the duns themselves are no joke.

Solitude has often been pushed forward as a great solacer of ills and one of the mainsprings of happiness ; but this is again contradicted by my infallible clock, with the assertions that solitude was not made for man, that madness hangs like a thunder cloud over sequestered spots, and across the face of this time-piece of facts, there glides, like so many vouchers, numerous figures of men dead and living—amongst the former I notice that of Swedenborg, Zimmerman, and Rousseau.

Well ! what then ? shall I take a fiddle and fiddle through all adversity ? or a flute and play " There's a good time coming, boys," as the last shilling bids me good-bye ? or shall I " March to Prague " on the piano, when that wretched bailiff invites me to accompany him to Old Bailey ?

No ! to the deuce with fiddles, flutes, and pianos, I shall get a world of cushions and smoke myself into bliss.

But opium won't do neither ; it wafts you there,

but it invariably returns you, not to the same state of things however, oh no, but back to dreary rooms, dreary pictures, dreary business, dreary men, dull books, and wretched looking women.

Wine gives you a headache, and delightful dishes indigestion; the sea has its penalties, and when you travel by railway, Mr. Vian will insure your life for a penny.

If you hunt all day, do your boots come off easily at night? If you fish all day, don't you run a chance of getting drowned and catching a minnow?

You have this moment calmly determined not to be disappointed at anything, and in the next equal period of time an old hag rushes into your room and congratulates you (has she a conscience?) on your wife's safe delivery of four charming babies, all doing well.

You have a notion that the garden of Eden lies somewhere in North America amongst the lost, and if they are found, very much transfigured twelve tribes of Israel,* who disenchant you very soon of the delights of encamping in gorgeous prairies, black with the buffalo, by the sides of salmon peopled streams—of the pleasures of hunting the wild horse and possessing squaws, and send you home minus your scalp, and with a set of pains called rheumatism. So you kiss a lady and get a slap on the face—your shirts want buttons—you buy a horse that flings you, and your landlady drinks your sherry.

* There is a theory, on paper, purporting that the North American Indians are Jews.

Where shall your miseries end, and your happiness begin? At death? Who knows, and who is willing to exchange half-a-crown for nothing, a world of life for a supposed happiness at death?

Is there a paradise in the moon, or is that only a poet's fancy? Do the lesser stars have lodgings to let; and who can tell me whether the sun is gifted with oysters?

On a paper round half-a-pound of salt butter I got the solution of this most important problem, in these momentous words, "*Nihil admirare.*"

Nothing admire, is happiness, and so I found it.

Blessed, thrice blessed, be that old Roman, and may he now be reaping the benefit of his important discovery.

Why, it ought to have been patented and sold in shares.

I loved a lady whom I wished to make my wife.

She appeared to detest me, notwithstanding my most ardent protestations.

I loudly praised everything she did and said, and worshipped her very footprints. A stray brooch or a lost glove was all I ever received or rather abstracted.

An officer in the volunteers, a big, soft creature, who gossiped better than many an old woman, was said to be the favored individual.

Flattery not succeeding, I tried presents, but they were always returned, rejected, with thanks.

Foiled at every point, I could no longer endure the scorn of the lady and the boasting of my rival.

I resolved to leave the country, and seek in change of scene relief from grief.

But the butter-wrapper told me "nothing admire" is happiness, and my emigration thoughts took to flight, and my tea which was only waiting for the butter, got as cold as spring water, and I repeated again and again, these glorious words, "nothing admire."

I no longer flattered the lady—she was not troubled any more with my presents—I even became sufficient to ask my rival when the affair was to come off, and if he intended to fend me an invite.

My "*Nil admirare*," caused the young lady to become the wooer—she has been my wife for a week, and at present I have found a paradise. When my paradise breaks up as it may, I shall resort to my butter-wrapper and—nothing admire.





II.

How an Actress Disposed of Her Child.

THERE were fifteen of us, and the steam-boat "Lennox" bound for Belfast, soon steamed us out of sight of Ardrossan.

My destination is Dublin, but if I had known the misfortunes that are soon to befall me, I would rather have jumped overboard near Arran, where we passed a number of small boats, although I can swim like lead, or tortured myself for a whole day in this year's exhibition of paintings.

She was like a creation of a poet or a painter, not a Pre-Raphælite one by any means. When I turn less foolish, I intend to worship the genius of my country as illustrated in their annual specimens of art, to listen patiently every Sunday to the most abstruse speaker, and to ask Millais to get me one of his models (that grave-digging nun, for instance) for a wife. Not like one of these dry clothes-presß looking creatures. Oh, no! More assimilated to the fancy of a Raphæl resuscitated, having got leave of absence for one day the keeper of her gilded frame.

And the little sarcastic thing seemed determined to make the most of her day, for she had us all in her chains ere we had failed an hour together, and she kindly gave me her baby to keep.

She had a baby, a little cherub, I called it, and soon after a little — something else.

The baby could not surely be her own; she was so young, so like a child herself, that I could easily have carried her in my arms and gulled that rude brute of a ticket collector at Edinburgh.*

Why are ticket collectors so imperious in their demands for tickets? I have travelled frequently with an old lady who always has her ticket ready at Ratho, and who never approaches Princes Street without trembling. Yet with all her preparation, the vulgar fellow rudely snatches the ticket from her, as if she had never expended ten shillings on it, but as if he had expected to find her without one, and had been waiting to convey her before the authorities. The poor lady gives a sigh of relief when the ordeal is over, and takes a sniff at her pouncet-box.

“Where do ticket collectors come from?” this old lady asked me one day.

“From Bow Street, madam; they are detectives,” I said, and I think the good creature believed me.

* * * *

There were fifteen of us—fourteen gentlemen and the beauty—the child at present, counts *nil*, it counted one too many too soon; and we were all adoring the lady

* Dismissed, we believe.

at the same time, only as I had the baby to keep, some of my attentions were necessarily devoted to it; but the sweet smiles I got from the mother amply repaid the little trouble I had with her offspring.

Let me give you an inventory of us.

I will omit the steamboat's staff, as their compass sternly pointed to duty and did not permit liberties on watch; the captain might have been immortalized by my pen, but he came on board intoxicated and was hiding somewhere. I saw that there was no mate on board, and that the captain's duties now devolved upon the steward, who was determined to have the honors as well as the duties; but his star was on the wane. He had no sooner seated himself by the side of the beauty and began whispering in her ear, than a voice was heard crying, "Steward, steward; a basin, a basin, a basin!"

One of the passengers had apparently taken the sea-sickness, and the steward had still to perform the steward's duties, much against his will.

Now I am convinced the cry for the steward was only a ruse to get the steward's seat, for a person very like the writer of this seated himself on the vacant camp-stool, and commenced to hush his baby (he had one—could it be the lady's?) in the most approved style.

The steward found that the sea penalty paying mortal was a myth, and quickly returned to the deck; but his place, you know, is usurped, and he saw that opportunity was gone.

Fancy the half of an egg, with our beauty seated on the middle of the straight line, the man at the wheel opposite on the farthest away point of the curve (if we had struck on a rock that night or gone back to Ardrossan in mistake, I could have told the cause), and the fourteen gentlemen filling up the vacant space, and you have some idea of our position.

This writer had the misfortune to be seated on the lady's right hand, and to receive a great proportion of the electricity which she poured in such volumes from her glorious dark eyes.

Now all his life the writer has prided himself on his smartness; he is not vain of his talents (they are said to be considerable), nor does he expose his cleverness on all occasions; he is rather quiet than otherwise, while others argue he listens; he speaks always to the point; he eats sparingly; does not drink much; has no particular vice; is able, in his unostentatious way, to assume different characters which are understood to be his own—was never cheated in his life—was never yet pushed into a curious position from which he did not extricate himself with flying colors; his articles have been accepted by an eminent review, and *Punch* has vouched for the genuineness of his satire; he looks on men and things philosophically (although only aged twenty-two last birth-day), his only aversion is to babies; he adores ladies, but only when they have been nursed, and schooled, and drawing-roomed; he loves to talk to young gentlemen, but they must

have got through their teething, and have left pinafores behind for some years.

At present he nurses a lady-baby for the sake of its mother, and he does it so well, that the little creature has not uttered a single complaint, a proof positive of the elasticity of his character and of his habit of making the best of everything.

No. 2 gentleman on the lady's left hand is a tremendous swell; he appears to know the beauty, for he is always fumbling away at her head or dress, and calling her "my beloved Jane," a liberty which I would never have borne, if Jane had not whispered to me as she put her baby's head in a more comfortable position on my breast, "Never mind him, he's mad!"

Of course after this, I treated No. 2 gentleman as if he had been a sick brother; and when the night got chilly, I went to the cabin for his cloak and wrapped it round him.

He laughed loudly at this, and said "Walker," but his mirth was not pleasant to hear, his laugh was one of those vacant ones, which sound on the ears like the gravel falling on a coffin. I was very sorry for him, poor fellow; and as I retook the baby from the lady, I whispered to her, "What a pity!"

I need not describe the other gentlemen to you, as they are only the back-ground of my picture. You can easily sketch their portraits. Put a lean one after a fat one, a tall man next to a short one, dress them in light and dark-colored clothes; give them every

shape of hat on their heads, and all kinds of hair on their faces, and put an odd mixture of remarks in their mouths ; make two wear spectacles, six of them smoke, four snuff, one chew tobacco, and as for the twelfth, he had a looking-glass in his hat and a comb in his pocket, with the aids of which he endeavored to improve his appearance every ten minutes.

The baby at present counts *nil* ; it counted one too many, too soon.

“Belfast,” cried the steward, very glad, I am sure, to interrupt our pleasant *tête-à-tête*.

What a world this is ; every man envying the happiness of his neighbour, and trying with might and will to slip a little strip of gall into each others pleasure cup.

“Will you keep Julia a minute, till I see after our things?” Jane said to me as the steam-boat touched the pier, and as the other passengers were hurrying on shore.

“Most willingly, Jane,” I said, and she gave it a little kiss and ran away.

I felt that this mysterious young lady was to have a powerful influence over my future existence—she was all that my boyhood had ever dreamed, or my maturer years fancied. I could not lose her now, and away my imagination sped to brilliant scenes where Jane and I played the principal parts of the life drama, and were always successful.

I was awakened from my charming reverie by the steward, of course, who, with a large grin on his broad,

red face, asked me impertinently, "If I and my baby were going on shore to-night."

"We intend so, at the proper time," I said haughtily. "We are waiting on a young lady."

"Is she coming from the city?" asked the steward in an altered tone, as if he had committed some mistake, I had just pointed out to him.

I enjoyed his servile manner, and then said, "No, the young lady is one of the passengers."

The grin on his vulgar face returned, as he said, "Then you'll require to wait awhile. That young lady is on shore, a quarter of an hour ago; there is not a single passenger on board but yourself and your baby," and the creature laughed outright.

"Jane has gone to look for a car," I said, as I stepped ashore; the cursed baby, who was beginning to howl, in one arm and my portmanteau in the other.

The steward's face had a puzzled look, as if he did not know what to think.

But the moment I put my foot on land, my sufferings began.

Ireland beats all the countries in the world for touters. Imagine two dozen rascals without bonnets and with scarcely any clothes, and yelling like so many imps just let loose from pandemonium, tugging vehemently at the portmanteau, the baby, and myself.

Ugh! That night makes me dizzy yet, when I think of it.

"Tick yer beeby and 'mantoo, for tuppence," said a villain, with red hair and a large scar over his eye.

"Two for a penny, fir," exclaimed one seizing the baby, which tried to scratch out his eyes.

"Take care," cried another behind me in grave tones, at which they all laughed, "Hee'l bolt with it."

"I wish to God he would," I said to myself.

"Baby for a happney, your riverence."

"Car your lordship. Baby free."

"A barrow, your excellency, for your luggage; child can sit on the top."

"Hootil, baron? We have a bootiful cradle."

"Don't be afther pothering the gintlemin, will ye! Blazes tik ye, for a set of ragamuffins. Isn't it Pat O'Rooney his honour wants to nurse his iligant baby."

I could not get moved, and the noise these young rascals made, was, to say the least of it, awful; and the curious position I was in, in connection with that baby, was far from being pleasant.

But observe what follows—see how I am able to rise superior to peculiar circumstances.

"*The child has the small-pox,*" I whispered, and in a minute every one of my tormentors had disappeared, and I went to a quiet hotel, where an elderly woman took charge of the baby.

The undernoted paragraph and letter will explain themselves and end my narrative.

"A MYSTERIOUS OCCURRENCE. — Last night at twenty-one minutes past eleven o'clock, the bell of the Jesuit's College was violently rung, and when the

porter opened the gate he found attached to the handle of the bell a basket, with a live female child inside. A strict private search is, we believe, being made into this atrocious act, and the guilty party is quite sure to be, sooner or later, exposed. As for the calumnies which are being circulated amongst the heretics, we give them a flat denial, and, perhaps, we are not far wrong in laying the deed at the doors of those who wish to draw a cloud of slander over the heads of the faithful. The holy fathers, touched with pity for the poor infant—like Jesus of old—have ordered it to be brought up carefully in the tenets of our blessed religion, and allowed to enter a convent when it reaches maturer years.”—*Morning News*.

The Letter.—“*You are too clever, sir, by half. Poor Julia a nun, and her mother a Desdemona! I have a good mind to ring the Jesuit’s bell, too, but with different intentions. The little dear.*”

“*JANE.*”





III.

Pills and Ointment.

REMEDIES for the million, milestone the march of civilization.

Stump orators, great in belting the earth with lightning and defrauding old time with steam, ought always to stick in the peroration the pills and ointment.

They are most important to man—their labels say ; all newspapers record their worth—for payment ; and reverend gentlemen will extol their excellencies from church pulpits—when they are known to effect a cure.

A single cure ! ridiculous. A world of cures.

They will withdraw the pimples from your face, and extract the corns from your toes, and restore a feeble-minded man to his senses.

If you are blind you will see ; lame, you will walk ; your hair need never turn gray, nor your teeth fail, nor you breath smell, whether you eat French garlic or Scotch haggis.

They are great in cases of tooth-ache, and they cure the gout.

Lungs fail not under their benign influence—consumption is banished from the most wasted forms. Rub a dead man well with the ointment and he will come to life again—all kinds of mania and insanity cured on the shortest notice—a pure mind in a pure body, that is health, which, mark you, is only to be had through the pills and ointment.

Shade of Nebuchadnezzar ! don't you wish you were in the flesh ?

They are quite safe, be it widely known. They may, with entire security, be administered to babies ; and a grown up person is directed to swallow only ten pills a night, and rub well the affected parts with the ointment.

Patients undergoing this treatment will require to be as rich as Cræsus, to get their medicine in cart-loads, and be able to devote sufficient time to the swallowing and rubbing.

God forbid that I should have anything to do with them ; they would ruin me in a month. Time with me is everything, and I never yet swallowed a single pill in less than half-an-hour, and even then the greater part of it was chewed and plastered about my gums.

Din a thing continually into a man's ears, and he will at last believe it, appears to be the motto of these respectable (?) vendors of universal medicines ; and they are eminently successful.

Don't I know one who keeps a carriage, and is received in the best society.

Another preaches to a large congregation every Sunday.

They are called the philanthropists of the age—the great medical reformers—statues are erected to them—we write their biographies, and we knight them.

Success makes a person respectable.

Failure is a creature to be jeered and kicked.

But what about all this humbug? We must keep up with the times. We had better get a new Shakespeare and another translation of the Bible.

I love old things and ancient customs. I weep over the flipper of the child that died. A stray letter gives me delightful remembrances for hours. I adore these grand old *tomes*, and let Vandal hands keep aloof, and clip a scene or two from the last novel, or abstain from going to the opera for a week, or sift the composition of our all-healing medicines.

Now, if I wished to gain a million or two, I would get appointed as clerk in the Bank of England, and keep two passbooks; or on a certain railway which has very acute auditors, and issue duplicate shares; or be a quack doctor.

The last is certainly the best.

Why, in such an eminent profession, you may become an elder of the church, chairman to half-a-dozen religious societies, and marry a countess. But things false get sooner or later unmasked—we get too aged for gilt ginger-bread or coated pills. I one

day examined the *Great Eastern* and found it superior to all the descriptions, and lately I analyzed one of those famous pills, and it turned out to be nothing but meal with a coating of sugar.

I could breakfast on them in Scotland if they were not one shilling and three-halfpence per box, and call the mess—porridge.

Delusions like the water's foam get soon dissolved. These gentlemen forget that the last witch was burned some time ago, that Professor Anderson is not infallible, and that the elixir of life is yet to be discovered.





IV.

My Youthful Loves.



HE first was a modest village maiden with red hair and a tartan frock, and her name was Katie.

I adored her for two years, and never as much as got, or thought of getting a single kiss from her. Once only, and I never could tell how, my arm clasped her little waist, at which strange circumstance we both blushed and she ran off.

I have lingered about her father's house with her stupid brothers, whom I detested, for hours on end, and thought myself amply rewarded by hearing her speak, or seeing her much beloved form passing the window. On Hogmanay night, I disguised myself with others, purposely to see Katie, and I remember distinctly she was sitting in a little chair near the fire, hushing to sleep her little brother. Her hair was shaded back over her ears, and a sweet smile at our odd figures put dimples in her rosy cheeks.

That smile added a white stone to my love.

I never could tell what quenched my love for the young lady, unless it was the idea that she had a notion of me; this appeared in my eyes like a heinous crime, so I dropped Katie, who did not put on mourning for me, little flirt that she was, and got entangled in the meshes of a Jane.

Jane had fair hair, and whistled.

The whistling first attracted me to her; but she was too bold.

There was a game played then, perhaps it is extinct now, called "Round about Mary Mentancy," in which the girls joined hands and formed themselves into a ring, putting one in the midst, who was obliged to disclose the name of her sweetheart, and every name was made public by the whole ring, as they danced round, in this manner :—

"What will you give me to tell his name?"

To tell his name?

To tell his name?

What will you give me to tell his name?

Round about Mary Mentancy!

James Smith is his name!

Is his name!

Is his name!

James Smith is his name!

Round about Mary Mentancy."

We boys used to gather round the ring to watch

the directions of the young ladies' affections, and if it was a young gentleman at our school who was the chosen one, he was loudly cheered at the time, and plagued about it months afterwards.

One day it happened that it was Jane's turn to reveal the name of her sweetheart, and she selected me, to my great shame. I skulked off as fast as I could, but the other boys were too quick for me. They brought me back shoulder-high, and a wag suggested that Jane should kiss her lover. The proposal was received with loud applause, and seconded by every one; and they held me while Jane, who was whistling all the time, as if she had nothing to do with it, came up and put her lips to mine.

'Twas my first kiss, and with it all my affection for Jane fled. I was afraid that after such a public avowal of her love for me, she might think I was entitled to marry her, when our lessons were over. I slept none that night, and next morning I secretly told the whole affair to my father, who comforted me much by saying that if the girl persisted in marrying me I must get a divorce.

Julia is the third on my list, and she entrapped me one day by giving me an apple. "Don't tell them," she said, and ran away, and every time we met afterwards, we looked at each other in a knowing way as if we had deep secrets between our two selves.

She was a quiet little thing, and she carried a doll in her pocket, which she was always dressing during play hours. When she saw I was alone, she would

steal up and take out her doll, and ask, in most respectful tones, my opinion about the color of the ribbon for its hair; whether merino or silk would make the better dress, and whether a red or white petticoat should be adopted.

We went about our intrigue so quietly, that not a creature guessed it. We never spoke to each other when there were people present; but I think the schoolmaster found it out at last, for one day I heard him say, "Julia, you must learn this psalm—James Smith has it by heart."

One morning I missed Julia, and I heard some of her companions tell that she was ill, and that the doctor had been seeing her.

I played none that day, and, in secret, I wept bitterly.

She grew worse and worse: they said it was consumption, and that she must die.

I escaped from home one dark night, and went to her house to see her. I feared they would not allow me to go in, and I stood at the door a long time undecided whether to ring the bell or run off. I believe I would have returned without seeing her, if the door had not been quickly opened to allow the doctor to come out. He saw me and said, "Is that you James? Julia was just speaking about you—go in and see her, but don't speak much." I was taken into her little bed-room, and was grieved to see Julia so pale; but she then appeared very pretty. Her mother left us together, and I crept up to the side of her little

bed. Our little hands got clofed on each other, and we looked into each others eyes ; but we spoke not a word, and I left her without either of us fpeaking a word.

Next day fhe died, and they asked me to go to her funeral, which I did, and cried myfelf fick over her little grave.

The world has turned round many of its dark fides to me fince then, and I have often been difappointed with things mundane, and the greater part of my youthful innocence may have been fupplanted by a knowledge of evil, yet the fweet remembrance of that little girl ftill remains frefh in my memory, and I never vifit that village without going to her little green grave under the cyprefs tree, and, perhaps, fhedding a tear over it.





V.

Janim's Philosophy.



ANIM said to himself one day, "I am determined to be happy in defiance of all obstacles," and when he happened to look out into the street, he beheld his darling and only son run over by a carriage driven by a drunk coachman.

"Oh!" cried Janim, "what a misfortune—is this, my poor boy lame for life, and all through the stupidity of a wretch who had imbibed too much liquor! How is it?" he exclaimed more vehemently than before—for his son's cries from his undergoing an operation in the next room reached his ears—"how is it man is so dependant for his happiness on his fellow men, who strive to make him miserable?" But when his blood turned cooler and the excitement of the moment had gone, and his son's screams ceased to rend his heart, his philosophy returned to him, as he sat in his easy chair by the comfortable

study fire, sipping a delightful beverage called "punch," and he slowly reasoned aloud thus: "Man is prone to run into evil. Take away the legs from man and you curtail his vices. My son has a greater chance of getting into heaven without his legs than with them. I now perceive the hand of providence in the circumstance, and bow before the Universal Disposer of events," and he took another sip of the nice drink, and sank back amongst the cushions of his chair.

Janim was quickly aroused from his voluptuous reverie by a loud knocking at the front door. He carefully wrapped his fur dressing-gown round his body, lighted a candle, and went to see what was the matter. As he traversed the passages, the knocking waxed louder and louder; but our philosopher did not hasten his dignified pace. It does not become a man who has unveiled nature and looked into the laws of heaven, to be surprised at anything.

He opened the door only a minute or two before it would have been driven in, and on the steps he saw a dozen of his friends, who were all eagerly proclaiming something to him, which from their voices not sounding on the same key he could not understand.

"Gentlemen," said Janim, "You see I am calm, what is it?"

One cleverer than the rest answered quickly before the others had time to open their mouths, "Your wife has eloped with Ashnu."

"Your wife has eloped with Ashnu," repeated the

other gentlemen, determined to publish the unpleasant news as often as their too quick neighbour.

"Well, gentlemen, I have to thank you for the information, but you might have told me it as well to-morrow morning. I shall go to sleep—good night."

Now Janim was a great art critic, and worshipped the beautiful; indeed some of his contemporaries alleged that the supremely lovely had got between him and his wits. With that we have nothing to do. We know that if every madman was to have chains, the greater part of the land would certainly be covered by a large lunatic asylum, and that there would be an immense number of high offices vacant.

Janim was in the zenith of his fame, when he beheld one day in the small city of Heth, lying on the banks of the river Beth, a beautiful maiden tripping neatly along. Janim's attention was arrested by the lady's smile. The maiden had heard of Janim and of his love for the beautiful, and she lifted up her dress two inches higher, and exposed to Janim's enraptured gaze a charming ankle.

"I give gold for paintings, I must give my hand for the possession of this beautiful female," said Janim.

So they were married; and after Ashnu had listened to the sublime art lessons of Janim, she bore a son, the child that had become lame.

"This is marvellous work," said Janim, nevertheless he kept his own counsel, and trusted in providence.

Ashnu, the best pupil of Janim, was also a great lover of the beautiful; but the people said he would

never venture under a riddle where there were only chaff; he listened attentively to the lectures of Janim, and adored Janim's wife, and was extremely fond of Janim's child.

Janim was greatly pleased to see his wife and son noticed so much; he exhibited her to his friends on the same principle as he shewed his grand painting of "The Stone and Leaves;" and he lent her frequently for a model.

Ashnu often availed himself of the privilege; and if Janim happened to enter the painting-room when his wife's dress was unartistically disarranged, he would place the folds of the gorgeous velvet correctly, exposing more of the lady's bosom, and trippingly retire, saying, "Ashnu, Ashnu, you must immortalize such perfection of beauty."

So she was gone, and Janim true to his resolve, consoled himself with this reflection, "She would fade; a painting is better than a woman. I shall purchase the 'Two Bricks and Snail' to-morrow."

But his philosophy was a little shaken when he read the following note, which he could scarcely understand:—

"Give my mother, who will deliver this, and who will explain to you that the child could never have been yours, my dear, dear boy; and I may perhaps cause Ashnu, who desires that your shadow may never be less, to paint him for you, which you will of course consider of more value than the child himself. You will remember this great truth which I always have

in view, you impressed it so often, and so distinctly on our minds, 'that mortals die, but paintings become immortal.'

"SUSA ASHNU."

"Cool," said Janim, after reading the above letter, and pausing a single minute at the signature, "Cool, very cool ; 'Sufa Ashnu.' I did certainly think the age of miracles was past. And these little nets of affection, they but tend to drag man into feeling, and through feeling into misery. Take the child, madam, it screams so abominably, I was confident it could not be mine ; 'The Bricks and Snail' in the height of perfection, hangs on my wall for ever."

Janim adores Gothic architecture, and had reared for himself with unsurpassed care and negligence, six stories of fantastic building ; such windows, and gables, and roof, and great and small effects, no human being had ever the good fortune to behold before in one work.

This building became the talk of the universe, and Janim's philosophy got lost in his pride. "I create," he said, "the wonders of the world."

And these six stories of Gothic architecture became so dear to him that he forgot entirely his wife and child, and omitted to think about a God.

But the moment of triumph is often the hour of defeat.

Janim after carefully going over his house with a wax candle and retiring to rest on a bed of down, was awakened in the middle of the night by cries of "Fire, fire," and by some soldiers pricking him with the points of their bayonets.

Janim bewildered with the glare of the flames, the noise of the people, and the wounds the soldiers had made in his unoffending body, could only exclaim as he buttoned his trousers and put a pistol in each pocket—(they had powder, but no ball), “Hallo, good people, what is the meaning of all this?”

The crowd, ever ready to publish misfortune, answered, “Janim, Janim, your Gothic building is on flames;” and then, as they were not interested in the conflagration, laughed.

The building was soon reduced to ashes, and on the morrow nought remained of the “wonder of the universe,” but a few gilded weathercocks.

* * * *

“Can you tell me what was the cause of this great fire?” asked a Dutchman of an Italian, as they met at the ruins.

“There are numerous reports, but the one I believe is this,” replied the Italian. “This, you will know, was the wondrous building erected by Janim. It was a miracle of art, as well as a mountain of foolishness. Janim not satisfied with erecting a building in a particular style, must decorate it with wild fancies of his own. He conceived the entirely new idea of covering the walls with colored papers, and last night one of the band of the soldiers of the watch, in want of a light for his pipe, tore off an inch or two of the paper on Janim’s walls, and as he struck a light with his steel, a spark alighted on a rose-colored banner, covering a hideous hole near

the corner stone. The rose-colored banner took fire, and the flames quickly spread to other banners concealing other defects, and soon the whole structure was in a blaze, and what you now see, is all that remains of Janim's work."

The Dutchman spat twice at the ruins and went to Yorkshire by express train to paint a bull, a cow, and a woman.

The Italian shrugged his shoulders at both the Dutchman and Janim's ashes, and departed to the palaces of the nobles, in search of a Madonna for his Holy Family.

As for Janim, he has not made up his mind what to think of his three misfortunes ; sometimes he weeps and at other times laughs, and occasionally he is heard whispering to his nearest neighbours, "Don't you think it good fun? Is not this the best of all possible worlds?"





VI.

The Confessions of Jeremiah Fitzspooney. Solomon and Shakspeare.



RIVIAL things do not discourage me ;
opposition only makes me more tenacious
of my point.

But it generally happens that I prick myself on the point I have so industriously won, and when the little drops of blood begin to ooze out of the wound I sincerely regret my stupid conduct.

But Solomon was not perfect, you know. I have some little failings, I own ; who has not ?

Now amongst all these great men of ancient days, Solomon is my particular star ; whether it is for his unerring wisdom, or his then, and perhaps now, unsurpassed magnificence, or for his beautiful collection of ladies, I cannot tell.

The story of Sheba's Queen's visit to him, and his ingenuity in discovering the natural flowers from the waxen, first attracted me to him when a child ; then his building of the Temple arrested my attention, and latterly these charming songs.

If ever king loved a woman, Solomon did, and how nicely he turns us out all the windings of the softer passion—if ever king quaffed to the very dregs a full cup of pleasure, Solomon did—if ever king was wise from personal experience of human nature, Solomon was—if ever king was wearied of life and its many joys, Solomon was.

Said he not these everlasting words, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity?"

Now, I am convinced I have my own share of wisdom, and I wish to benefit my less gifted fellow creatures—why should a light be placed under a bushel? But when I commence to give them my advice in calm measured tones and in something like the following words, they laugh, and say "Bye, bye, Jerry," or "Ta, ta, Jerry." Infatuated mortals!

"Well now let us calmly look at all sides of the question, without being prejudiced to one side or another—sift the whole matter to the bottom, until all mystery is spread out in the face of day, and then judge, keeping in remembrance the memorable examples of Solomon, that great law-giver. You say the thing is trivial, let me tell you there is nothing in this world so mean as to be trifling; nothing of so little moment to man as to cause him to pass over it; nothing—"

But they generally leave me when I get this length, and sometimes before I have well begun.

Now, I appeal to you, ladies and gentlemen, is not the above good sense and worthy of the closest attention.

If they had waited longer so much the better for themselves ; they shall yet repent their carelessness, when I am not near to give them advice.

I have come to the conclusion that human nature is made up of bundles of contrarities—of a sad mixture of bad and good qualities—of many askings for what it has not, and much not caring for what it possesses.

As instances of this—

When a certain individual (I have a good mind to name him), who, as a rule, decamps as soon as I begin advising him, has talked with me a short time without getting the benefit of my opinions, he always says "Give me your advice, Jerry—where is Solomon?" They will know me better through time. There is a possibility of being in advance of the age. No man is a prophet in his own country.

Two days ago I saw one lad learning another the beats of the drum on a stone. I met a city missionary last night, and he told me he was busily engaged studying theology—out of Milton's "Comus" and Byron's "Don Juan."

I have seen a man playing the fiddle on a tin whistle. Another man writes his love letters with his toes.

If you wish the governor to tip you, don't you appear flush of money?

Mamma loves her darling Tom, because he is such a nice, quiet boy ; she does not know, poor woman, that outside he goes under the *nom de plume* of Powder-flash.

It is not madam ; but it seems.

Shakſpeare, that big gun of poetry is a myth to me. Was he not a Ruffian, and did he not write leading articles in the *Times* ?

I have ſeen Romeo and Juliet go through their melting ſcenes in capital Ruſs, and I opened the *Times* one day and found a ſcene from Richard III. in the firſt article.

The ſtreet boy, who is not to be gulled, fees through your humbug, puts his thumb to his face's projective, and whiſpers in your ear, "Very like a whale."

You attend a meeting of the directors of the propoſed Never End Railway. The chairman makes a long ſpeech in its favour ; the vice-chairman ditto, ditto ; Sir John Vevan Jenks a longer one contra ; and after that, half a dozen gentlemen try their oratorical powers. Some of them are ſo amazed at their own glibneſs (the railway is to paſs through their property), that they try to ſpeak four at a time ; but as they had never practiſed together, the notes jar and the tune is loſt, and nothing but a found like that of a ſtream daſhing over jagged rocks is heard. A duet is attempted, but it alſo fails, and ſilence reigns through that, but a moment before, ſtormy ſaloon.

But this quiet cannot continue ; ſomething muſt be done, and done it is, and in glorious words too. The chairman jumps from his chair, hits the table a hard blow with his hand, and exclaims, "To be or not to be, that is the queſtion."

In a grove on the banks of the blue Moſelle I heard

a love scene, tender, very, and with consequences too, for the young lady, who was as beautiful a creature as ever peopled the paradise of a Mahomet, or the opium imagination of a De Quincey, was won. How I envied the possessor !

He opened the scene with—

*“ Oh that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek.”*

In the climax, exclaimed passionately—

*“ Lady, by yonder blessed moon, I swear,
That tips with silver all these fruit tree tops.”*

And the young man said in the end,

*“ O blessed, blessed night, I am afraid ;
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering, sweet, to be substantial.”*

How can I understand Shakspeare when I meet him in all places, in so many different guises ?

How can any but an immortal man be everywhere, and exist through all ages ?





VII.

Nothing New.

Y publisher informs me that nothing but original articles take now-a-days, as if the *litterateurs* had not long ago swept clean the palaces of thought, and left us only—what? is it nothing? no, for nothing has been engaged since bulk was conceived in nonentity, and a God said let there be light.

Original ware, you say, is not the idea itself—rather striking in the middle of the nineteenth century; but I am desirous of pleasing you; but tell me, only give me the least hint of the whereabouts of this unwrought material.

You know heaven, hell, and purgatory are exposed in Dante for 5s.; the minds of men in Shakspeare for 4s. 6d.; and the Manners and Customs of all Nations for 3s. 6d. Shall I sack the earth for an unknown passion, or patent a new pleasure? Have not all flowers been culled, and all sweets extracted, and everything new made known? I verily believe that honey is to have no opposition;

that we are to have nothing better than turtle soup ; that the end of the world is at hand (is it not, *Cumming* ?)—that we are to be provided with no additional super-mundane things—that the earth has bared her womb and given up the whole history of its secret construction to man—that vice is to assume no new shape, and religion no other form than that of fanatic revivals.

This is a difficult task you have given me. I once thought of writing a romance, but I find the choicest ground on earth, and the best places in the heavens occupied—quite full—some standing at the door and knocking in vain for admittance.

Voltaire you know took to the larger stars, Poe sent his chinaman to the moon, Swift endowed horses with reason, and Mrs. Shelley built a man.

Let me pitch on the loneliest island in the Mediterranean, and there you will find Monte Christo with his hatchis and his Greek slave, who is a princess ; on the purple hued uplands of Scotland, and Rob Roy with his Ellen, Dugald creatur, and Baillie Nicol Jarvie of the Sautmarket, Glasgow, starts up from his bed of heather ; on the prison, and the immortal Picciola rises to view ; on the palace, and Ainsworth cries, "Hold that is mine." Cooper has possession of the sea with all its phases, and even the grave is inhabited. I am sick of these old old histories of feeling and action—is there nothing, nothing new ?

Lamenting thus the dearth of marvels below and above, and despairing of ever being able to compose

another line, we hastily packed up our portmanteau and threw ourselves into the train for London. But wonders, like angel's visits, come unawares, and we have still hopes of writing these hundered volumes.

From Perth to Carlisle I had the compartment of the railway carriage to myself. When the train started from Carlisle I was no longer alone, but had an old gentleman and young lady seated opposite me in the end seats; the centre seat on their side, is filled with their wrappers and luggage. The old gentleman, who is very fat, has a round face, a bald head, and who is always smiling, and I got into conversation at once, but the young lady said not a word and was never referred to. But let me here say that I heard the young lady was dead, otherwise I would not have consented to this publicity of her suffering.

I wondered at the young lady's silence, the more so, because she was very beautiful and had the prettiest lips and teeth I ever beheld. She did not seem more than sixteen years of age. She amused herself by drawing a house. I attributed the lady's silence to pride, and began to regret that I was so insignificant, as to be unworthy of her notice. It was easily seen that she was no commonplace creature; she handled her pencil with the freedom of a matured artist, and a most intricate Gothic building was being rapidly created. Her youth, her charming gestures, beautifully formed person, gay dress, and over the whole a shade of profound melancholy, would have interested the most insensible.

At Preston the old gentleman asked me "If I was

going out?" and on my saying "No," left us, as he said, "To get some refreshments." Before he went to the refreshment rooms, I saw him speaking with the train conductor, who immediately came and locked our carriage door. "He is afraid to lose his beautiful companion," I said to the lady.

She stared at me, but said nothing.

"He is afraid to lose his beautiful companion," I repeated.

"House," she whispered.

"A pretty station-house."

"House!" she exclaimed, "The house must be aired," (she quickly took off her bonnet and unloosed her long black curls and shook them out on her shoulders). "House! The windows must be cleaned and opened," (she shut her eyes and wiped their lids, and then lifted them up). "House! The door must be painted and the hall papered," (she passed her handkerchief over her coral lips, and appeared to plaster something inside her little mouth). "House! The walls must be—"

To my great pleasure the old gentleman returned at this moment, and I looked at the lady and then at him inquiringly. He smiled, shook his head, and whispered, "House?"

I nodded.

"Lunatic," he said.

You can imagine my grief.



VIII.

Cousin Isabella.

I arrived at Rothesay last night in the steam-boat "Ruthven," and went to visit my relations, who are here for the summer, this morning, and was much annoyed to find only my cousin at home.

Imagine a young lady, of a tallish figure, good complexion (plenty of red), blue eyes, and fair hair, dressing, acting, and speaking, as much like a man as possible, and you have a picture of cousin Bell, a name by the way, she detested. "Isabella, if you please," she would say, and be the next moment heard exclaiming with her loud voice, "I say, Fred, is there any good reason why ladies should not smoke cigars, drive steam-engines," or some combustible thing of that sort.

Nature, I am sure, once designed her for a man and had made her a woman to test some private theory.

Perhaps the fickle goddess had then some thoughts of turning men into petticoats and aprons, and women into top boots and machintoshes. Who knows?

When I look around me in the ball-room, the theatre, the street, or in the home, not a single iota of system can I discover, and a most comprehensive word arises in inward view, *chance*.

I narrowly watch the actions of the human race, before and behind the curtain—appearances, and another most comprehensive word comes alongside *chance—destiny*.

“Well, old boy, how are you this morning,” said Bell, who was in riding costume, and was plaiting some whipcord when I entered.

“Are you going out? I will not detain you,” I said.

“You are very kind—I am in no hurry—sit down. Did you hear that strange report?”

“No, what?”

“Some people are so very commonplace. I like daring things, don’t you?” And she began cracking her whip, sometimes within an inch or two of my face.

“Very much, especially in young ladies.”

“I intend writing immediately, a large volume on the decadence of men.”

“I hope you won’t ask me to correct the grammar and spelling.”

“Get out with you, you old thing (I am only nineteen.)”

“I was just going,” I said.

“You shan’t go; don’t think to escape me in that manner,” and she placed her back to the door, making her whip go into figure eights.

"You could never guess what it is, I'll wager."

"Some people are so very commonplace," I replied.

"Guess, man, and shew that you have some spirit."

"Perhaps you have got your worsted arranged."

"Worsted! Such an idea," and she laughed prodigiously.

"You can at last play a tune on the piano correctly."

"To the deuce with pianos—I hate them."

"You understand the globes."

"Globes! Fiddlesticks!!"

"Well, I have it."

"What?"

"You can spell hippopotamus."

"Yes I can," and she spelt, pausing between every letter, m-o-n-k-e-y!

Now she began to caper round the room, singing very much out of tune—

*"The sea, the sea, the open sea,
The blue, the fresh, the ever free;
Without a mark, without a bound,
It runneth the earth's wide region round;
It plays with the clouds, it mocks the skies,
Or like a cradled creature lies.
I'm on the sea, I'm on the sea,
I am where I would ever be,
With the blue above and the blue below,
And silence wheresoever I go.
If a storm should come and awake the deep,
What matter? I shall ride and sleep."*

The sea! Could this rumour refer to Janet Shelley?

"What is this report, Isabella?"

"You have forgotten something."

"Something?"

"The Bell—"

*"I love, O how I love to ride
On the fierce, foaming, bursting tide,
Where every mad wave drowns the moon,
And whistles aloft its tempest tune;
And tells how goeth the world below,
And why the south-west wind doth blow."*

"Do give over that stuff," I said, "This rumour does not refer to that beautiful lady and bad looking man who sat next us in the 'Ruthven.'"

"Yes it does though; that little lady has eloped with that brilliant looking man in his yacht."

*"I never was on the dull, tame shore,
But I loved the great sea more and more,
And backward flew to her billowy breast,
Like a bird that seeketh her mother's nest—
And a mother she was and is to me,
For I was born on the open sea."*

"That bad looking man is not clever, Bell."

"Of course not, in your eyes. I am sure he can do a thing or two, which you would never dare to think of."

"He makes mistakes at all events."

"How?"

"He should have carried you off."

"And left you that insignificant thing I suppose," and she finished her song in a horrible bass voice.

*"The waves were white, and red the morn,
In the noisy hour when I was born;
The whale it whistled, the porpoise roll'd,
And the dolphins bared their backs of gold;
And never was heard such an outcry wild,
As welcom'd to life the ocean child.
I have lived since then in calm and strife,
Full fifty summers a rover's life,
With wealth to spend, and power to range,
But never have fought or sighed for change;
And death, whenever he comes to me,
Shall come on the wide unbounded sea!"*

"You can go now," she exclaimed.

"Thank you; you are improving immensely in singing," I said, as I was opening the door with the key she had just given me.

"Stop!"

"Another song?"

"Can you ride?"

"I believe I can."

"Well you can get Bayard (her own horse), and I shall ride Reckless (a huge savage brute of her father's). I will allow you to accompany me."

"How very condescending."

"Hypocrite, you know you hate me."

"May I offer you a cigar?"

"Get out with you, you old nasty thing," she said, trying to reach me with the lash of her whip.

I accompanied her in the hope of learning more about Janet Shelley.

After considerable trouble I at length made out

what report was being circulated amongst the inhabitants of Rothefay.

It was this—

That two years ago an estate was to be sold near Helensburgh. The day of sale came, and, in the crowd in the auction room, in Edinburgh, there might have been seen a little, nervous, old man, with sharp gray eyes, and gray hair, dressed in neat black clothes, and having a narrow band of crape round his little white hat. The upset price of the estate was £24,000. After a brisk competition it was knocked down to the old man. Reference, as is usual in such cases, was asked. The old man could give none. No one in the room knew him. All eyes were now turned on him. He did not appear to like this. He went up to the auctioneer and said, "I am a stranger; if the agent comes with me to a banker I shall arrange for payment." This was better than reference. The estate passed into the old man's hands. He entered into possession at once. The mansion-house was already beautifully furnished. He was accompanied by his wife and daughter. He had married twice. His daughter was by the first marriage. For a while all went on smoothly enough. About a year after they had taken possession of the estate, the village people began to shake their heads and whisper to each other that everything was not right up there. The wife, who was the first wife's lady's maid, had been frequently seen to meet a man in the park; the daughter to take a man in by the window, (this I do

not believe, and you may attribute its origin to Bell). The old man, who had always been eccentric, commenced to wear spectacles and grow more and more irritable, less and less endurable. The servants changed at every term. A fortnight ago, the wife disappeared. On Monday the daughter was not to be found. Strongly believed that the daughter came to Rothefay and eloped with a gentleman in his yacht. That the old man, who had been searching for his wife without success, was now seeking for his daughter with a like result.

* * * *

The country is beautiful to behold, but its trees and shrubs drop poison, on a ground everywhere dotted with snakes, lurking amongst the flowers, which are also tainted, or basking on the furze covered banks of the river, tenanted by the crafty crocodile, fierce alligator, and large eels, frightful to behold, as they shoot up their serpent like heads above the surface of the slimy, slowly moving water, on which water a boat manned by galley slaves is being rowed to a massive prison, a short distance off—in the boat a young man is being lashed into activity, and if you should have the curiosity to inquire into the history of this convict, the jailor will tell you that he is the notorious swindler, who once purchased an estate in Scotland, and whose famous character was the part of a nervous old man.





IX.

In which the Spirit-rappers Summon Lord Chesterfield.

LORD CHESTERFIELD having been summoned by the spirit-rappers, was politely requested to give them his opinion of the most prominent features of the age, and being a spirit, and having accordingly modes of motion inaccessible to men, his Lordship was enabled to report the result of his inquiry ere the *seance* was concluded.

The preliminary three knocks were given, and the report proceeded in the usual way.

His Lordship had been to Exeter Hall, the Opera, the Theatre, and the House of Commons, and had done the talking fish.

Before beginning business, his Lordship rapped, I have to request that all portraits of my person may be destroyed, as I am not inclined (three vigorous knocks) to get mixed up with the low people I see at every corner. Portrait painting must have degenerated since Joshua died—left Turner and Reynolds sitting on a cloud testing some new colours.

His Lordship being pacified on this point, began with—

EXETER HALL.

House densely crowded. Sat on a corner of the

speaker's desk. He was a little fat man with a very loud voice. He illustrated the sermon on the mount with a scene from Macbeth. No points of doctrine disputed—a decided improvement. He ended the discourse with the Scotch proverb, "It's an' ill wind that blows naebody good." Next discourse is advertised, "Cheap and good wine, sold here, who will buy?" Who will dispute now, that there is no connection between the theatre and the pulpit?

OPERA.

The opera is changing its shape for the worse, rapped Lord Chesterfield. Composers no longer produce connected dramas. They consult the wishes of the leading tenor before the public's. This is the mechanism of the modern opera. A number of unmeaning songs are set to very intricate music. A few beautiful, perhaps, scenes are imagined, with accessory characters and costumes, wherein it is barely possible the events might have taken place; and if the leading fingers are contented with their portions, the thing is an opera, and will probably achieve a success. The public doat on things they don't understand. They also like suggestive things. The modern opera being most intricate (in meaning), is a nice compliment to their intellectual power; but if it is pictures of certain kinds of life as it ought to be, I shall tell you who is the author of the Junius' letters, or take a message from you to burly Johnson whom I still detest.

* * * *

It was suggested here, to ask if Dr. Johnson had anything to do with dictionaries in the spiritual world,

but as this question might have hurt the feelings of Lord Chesterfield, it was put aside and his Lordship entered into the

THEATRE.

The theatre is losing its power—upholsterer is usurping the place of the actor. Drama of action and thought is being supplanted by that of facetious talk. Last tragedy produced some time ago. Shakspeare cut down to suit private opinion. [Six ejaculations.] His scenes stuffed full of water, furniture, boats, and rooms. Modern drama, adapted from the French. It depraves the tastes of the people. It affords no instructive lesson. It is like a soap bubble, puffs it and it disappears.

* * * * *
His Lordship appeared to be in a hurry at this point of the report, for the rapping became louder and quicker to the end.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Parliament, like Jerufalem, has had its rise and fall, now on the decline; party spirit pulling its usefulness to tatters. One party get their seats with gold, which is bribery; another party with an idea of peace, which is humbug; a third party by talking loudly about reform, for which no one is prepared. International theories formed, at which practical men laugh. Budgets issued, praised, and recalled. An empire is prompted to revolt by greafe. Millions of pounds annually spent on the followers of Confucius. Soldiers get accidentally clothed in rags. Candidates for office tested by public examination, which is no gauge of ability. But these matters are too unimpersonal,

for to gain the attention of the modern M.P. A pun, a jest, the verse of a song, the arrangement of the hair, or a new posture, is of more importance. His philosophy, "The machine will last out my time."

* * * *

There was still another subject to speak upon, but his Lordship appeared to have forgotten it. He was gently rapped into remembrance, "What about the Talking Fish, your Lordship?"

To which his Lordship replied, "Palmerston."

We could not see the connection between Her Majesty's prime minister and the talking fish, and announced as much to Lord Chesterfield in a neat sentence, and this is the answer, "Both, I am off to Naples to see young Bomba starting for Gaeta."

So far everything had gone well; the knockings had been carefully counted and worded in the dark, by Mr. Home.

But it was very odd that each subject had its own musical accompaniment.

Exeter Hall had a barrel organ playing "Poor Dog Tray;" the Opera, a violin, discoursing a selection of English airs by an eminent composer; the Theatre, a bass fiddle, grating out nothing particular; Parliament was rapped about to the sound of a drum and a postman's horn, and the *seance* was broken up to the sublime music of a penny whistle.

A few chairs had changed places, half a bottle of wine was gone, tasted perhaps by the exhausted Lord Chesterfield, and a door of the room was open, but that was all.



X

The Autobiography of John James Smythe.

NOW I am an ill-used person.

I am not addicted to drinking fine cognac brandy or Bass's pale ales in incredible quantities, nor to smoking coal hole pipes by the hour, nor to winking and smirking at every young lady I meet. I do not indulge in Samian potations out of dead men's craniums—I generally go to bed nightly, and to church every Sunday, and yet I am an ill-used person.

I have never been tried by a learned judge and jury for felony; I have not the eyes of a dragon or a basilisk, though some of my friends (heaven save me from them), pretend to see unusual gleams in these organs; I never snuff but what I sneeze; I have no partiality for human blood, and I never to my own knowledge was a subject of the King of the Cannibal Islands; yet, notwithstanding all this, I am a terribly ill-used member of society.

I seam my hair in the middle of my head, wear long, bushy whiskers, lip when I talk, mince when I

walk, and hum an air from *La Traviata* a la Piccolomini when I sit down. I have golden rings, golden pins, and golden chains, and my dress is exquisitely brilliant, yet the aristocracy persist in not noticing me.

My dignity is hatted at every step—some bouncing creature is sure to meet me everywhere, roaring in the distance, “Well, Johnny, how goes it?”

Fancy dignity, with the name of Johnny.

My hatred for certain individuals is intense, and they go about the ordinary affairs of life and treat me as coolly as if immortal disgrace never dropped from a combination of ink and quill.

Everything I doat on, flies my adoring grasp.

Love shirked me with a cold, “No, I hate you,” into the arms of a goose: my passion for sherry decamped at a railway station not fifty miles from Perth—in the shape of dregs of ale bottles and a little brimstone; friendship, the communion of the gods, turned its back upon me—about a bad fixpence, and peace I never possessed. How often have I whispered to myself—(do not turn it over ladies), “Am I not some condemned spirit, doomed to wander unreflecting, forlorn, and without hope, for a certain number of years through this wicked world.”

“I will become learned,” I said to myself, and write books which shall be the rage at Mudie’s, and open the doors of Mary Fair to me—I shall become the hero of boudoirs—I never kissed a lady in my life—be lionized at Almack’s, the Clubs, and in Rotten Row, and then surely I can do anything.

Well, will you believe it? Penna quite puzzled me—Alpha I could never make anything of (they said it meant A, but how, I never could understand); the French U gave me a sore throat for a month, so I thought it better to drop it; the Italian language at first sight appeared easier, but the I's and E's soon got too powerful for me, they began to stare at me everywhere and I give them up in despair.

I began the study of history, but the laws of Confucius were too much for me; the atrocities of the early popedom sickened me, and the man with the iron mask knocked me down.

Perhaps poetry is my forte; but when I looked narrowly into the construction, it changed its easy going appearance, quick as any chameleon, and assumed a most abstruse figure made up of new ideas (as if there were any); feet, imagine feet, spondees and dactyls, heathen names all, and as I am a rigid Christian I would not defile my hands with them.

Men of genius are sometimes ignorant of their particular gift for a considerable period—chance often uncovers it—it is only by diligent search you can acquire the knowledge to reap any benefit from it.

I am certainly not of the opinion of those men who say that a genius ought to be able to throw a halo round all that he does, to invent a new machine and talk well, to find out an error in the Newtonian system, and make a young lady fall in love with him; stuff, as if these trifles showed genius.

“Novel is the thing,” I murmured, and down I

fat to write three volumes, to be published by Smith, Elder, and Company, which would make the spirit of Decameron turn pale (if there is such a thing allowed in the other world), and the author of "What will he do with it?" tremble for his laurels.

It is very amazing that after making my clothes as loose as possible, casting aside my neck-tie, taking off my boots, tossing my hair into awful disorder, getting a new gold pen, beautiful black ink, and a ream of creamy foolscap, I could never write more than a single page, which an enemy said was not even mine but M. Dumas, a name, by-the-by, I had not previously heard of.

I turned my attention to the drama, and commenced a tragedy which was to rival Merope, but some how or another I never was able to bring more than one person on the stage, and he, like a parrot, only said "Both."

Here for the present, my tale of woes must end, for that perpetual impertinence, "Well, Johnny, how goes it?" has just been crammed into my poor ears, and the scamp adds with a wondering look, "Writing!"

"You think I can't write?"

"Humph, Johnny, ask me to take some supper and toss these things into the fire."

Now, am I not a very ill-used person?





XI.

A Specimen Paragraph.

IT sometimes happens that when parliament is dissolved and the *Times* has been mounted on a gridiron ; when Napoleon has not created a Solferino, after saying something particular to the Austrian Ambassador, or written a letter to his dear friend, Persigny ; when the *Saturday Review* is rusticationg, and *Punch* gone up the Rhine ; when the weather is everything that can be desired ; when no daring robbery has been enacted, nor no horrible murder been committed, nor no lady borne a monster ; nor no cabbage, onion, or carrot, has attained gigantic dimensions ; when no man has married his grandmother, or eloped with his wife's sister, or failed with a liability of a quarter of a million, that editors of country newspapers have considerable difficulty in filling their columns.

Then things, which nobody care about, assume important paragraphs, such as—WONDERFUL PERSEVERANCE.—An organ-grinder played one hour and thirty-five minutes before our office door this morning, and went away quite satisfied with three half-pence ; and matters of no consequence to any one, are set up in leading articles with titles, like the following, “ Lord

John Russell and Reform!" "Mrs. Jones and Cat," &c., &c.

We have done ourselves the pleasure of composing a specimen paragraph to be used only in these cases of emergency, and for which we expect, and it is little enough, favorable notices of this book.

It is this, and I say, printer, pray head it in leaded type—

AN EXTRAORDINARY MYSTERY IN THE MIDST OF US.—We had some business engagements in the centre part of the town yesterday, and were *en route* (as a Frenchman would say,) to fulfil them; but when we were walking down the middle of High Street in a reckless manner, having just knocked off an epic poem, and dashed through our weekly contribution to *Punch*; in fact, we felt capable of doing anything, from gauging infinitude, to piercing the veil of futurity; from looking in at a window, to drinking ink. Well, to resume, when we were walking down the middle of the street in that go-a-head way (as the Yankees put it), we beheld the parish pump.

Now the pump itself is not a wonderful pump, an ordinary pump, with the usual catch-me-if-you-dare handle attached to it. The pump stood where we have always seen it stand, and it did not appear to us (and we wore spectacles) to vomit wine or belch out beer, nor smoke a pipe, nor crack nuts, nor howl "Caller Herrin'," yet there was something mysterious about that pump. We gazed for a considerable time at this water giving thing, to the no small amazement of a whole lot of illiterate, unwashed females, with dirty

children in their arms, walked round it with a score (which is equal to twenty) of ragged boys at our heels, whom we treated with stoical indifference, worthy a Socrates ; but notwithstanding all this, we failed to discover wherein its unusual appearance lay, and to make the circumstance more mysterious still, when we approached the pump the strangeness vanished, as if Signor Bosco had just that moment pronounced a presto. We tasted the liquid flowing from it, it seemed water ; measured its height and circumference, they had not changed, and were about dropping the whole matter in despair, when quick, as a flash of lightning or the dash-by of an express train, a substance caught one of our feet and we were stretched at all our length on the earth.

But the pursuit of knowledge overcame physical fear. We arose immediately and the great secret was at length disclosed. Perseverance overcomes all obstacles.

Would you believe it, that within six yards of that pump there were actually a black snail and a large turnip ? (the snail tripped us and our head came against the turnip). The turnip possessed an appearance of soft substance most nauseous to see ; the green leaves projecting from it looked so much like the *esprit* of such a number of our young men, that we were obliged to apply our handkerchief to our face to wipe away the tears caused by our—laughter. It is unfortunately our duty to inform you that the snail, which did not get out of the way died, and we went to keep our engagements a wiser man.



XII.

*The Assassination of Napoleon.**



It is only by pursuing a particular path we can gain a desired end.

Divergings are only the turnings of the same path.

A man without method seldom succeeds in anything; when he does so, he must give chance the praise and not his own dexterity.

Before framing any plan, the characters of the persons concerned in it must be well considered; imagination should supply probable incidents, where failure is against and success with you, for which you educate your reason to play a proper part.

If you fail, you have the consolation of knowing that you have done everything that man could do.

Things will go against the most craftily devised scheme as long as the world lasts, as we hear they did when we were yet unborn, the earth and ocean chaos, no sun, no moon, no stars, in yonder heavens, and when Satan was the prime minister of God.

* Written in 1858.

If Archangel's projects fail, so well may man's ;
But in all failures you will discover some good,
In all successes you will find some bad.

Good and evil are so mixed together in this globe of ours, and man is so weak notwithstanding his possessing an immortal soul, that when he prays he often blasphemes, and when he blasphemes he often prays.

* * * *

Inside the most common form there exists something mysterious.

In a stone there is its wonderful composition made known by chemistry ; in a man, his feelings laid bare by circumstances.

But the stone may be lying in its sea-bed never to be seen by man ; the man may live, and die, and be buried, with the history of his inner life unrevealed.

The closest ties of relationship do not warrant an unrestricted confidence.

Have you not often thoughts, which, if spoken, would make you an object of disgust to your fellow creatures ?

We all cloak our minds for daily wear, and the natural bias of them appears only to serve a purpose or when we are alone.

Alone, it cannot be, for spirits of the dead continually surround the bodies of the living.

This is a great and terrible truth.

Have we not done dark deeds at which we would not have desired the presence of a dead mother ?

Old things become new at a certain age.

We live over again, in different shapes.

Out of the debris of our bodies springs forth the sustenance that propagates the human race.

Nothing is lost, but everything is not recorded.

* * * *

We suppose what is taking place in heaven and hell. We watch and note the alterations going on in the firmament. Great storms have their chronicles. The world has memorials of its great changes and important events. Certain seas and particular lands expand and lessen their bound, and the causes and effects are written, and the facts are handed from mind to mind, to the end. Each country, each town, each village, and sometimes particular houses, and men, have their annals.

But repeatedly we are told that no one can plumb the mystery of the two spiritual worlds; that other worlds paths are crooked and cannot be fathomed; and every one knows that no one can tell whether these worlds only consist of earth, and rock, and water, or whether they are teeming with life like our own; that fierce tornados sweep over lands untenanted by man; that the why and wherefore of shifting seas and changing lands are often unclear to mortal eyes, that heroic deeds pass uncared for in countries acknowledging a God and humanity; and that if houses could speak, they would unfold awful truths about men and women, which they of course will not willingly reveal of themselves.

Occasionally, however, these histories do creep out

of their darkness into the world, leaving a long track of love or abhorrence behind.

Love has unbosomed the tale.

Friendship has uncovered it.

And a death-bed has pressed it out of tortured breasts.

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In a dimly lighted room in Milan, Italy, four men whose faces were covered with masks, and whose forms were enveloped in large cloaks, sat round on a table, on which were a map of Europe and a combustible shell. The walls of the room has neither paper nor pictures, they are not suited for either, they are glistening with damp, and here and there a snail which the light has disconcerted, crawls slowly along the dirty surface, leaving a slimy track behind. The chairs and the table, the only furniture in the room, are of the plainest material and workmanship. The room has one window, covered at present, with a shutter crossed with bars of iron, and two doors lined with iron, one on each side of the room, as if it were sometimes necessary for visitors entering at one and leaving by the other; very convenient you will say, for men whose actions will not bear scrutiny.

But we will not judge these men without a hearing—let us listen.

“Forbear,” exclaimed one who seemed to speak with some authority. “Let us not quarrel amongst ourselves—better to clear the course before we attempt to run.”

“True,” said a second with a sneer, “Some of us

will always see obstacles and will always postpone—postpone, until now our land is no longer redeemable. Strange rumours are afloat, and men begin to speak of Italy with dire forebodings, as if the future had some terrible destiny for it.”

A third whispered, “Let us be cautious, gentlemen; time lost is sometimes time gained. I do not think the people are ripe for a revolution; they get accustomed to their degrading bonds, and indolence laughs at patriotism; it will require some startling action to arouse them from their lethargy.”

The fourth individual was silent and seemed deep in thought.

“Italy is ripe for freedom; the surface appears calm, but probe it and it will emit fire and curses.”

“More likely a yawn and a turning to the other side to sleep.”

“None of you are quite correct. In all lands there are men so feeble as to submit to every oppression, and others, who but wait an opportunity to be free. Rouse the latter and give them the chance, and the others will quickly open their eyes to their debasement.”

“To what a low standing have we come amongst the nations of the earth,” groaned one, “Italy and Greece, the fountains of wisdom and heroism, dead.”

“Sleeping.”

“The sleep of death.”

“I trust not; but amidst all this darkness I cannot see a single ray of light.”

Here is one,” said the fourth individual, who now

spoke for the first time, rising from his chair and placing his hand on the shell.

"Where?" they exclaimed.

"Here, the freedom of Italy rests in this bomb."

"How? Explain."

"Always projects and no results," muttered a second.

"Be cautious, gentlemen," said the third individual.

"Patriots, nine months have rolled away since we parted at Rome, and it seems we have met only to raise questions and create no answers; to dispute amongst ourselves, so that our enemies may laugh at us, and well they may; Holy Virgin, if four men cannot agree that Italy should be free, what will twenty-four millions think of it?"

"Let us cast aside party feelings and party inclinations," the fourth speaker continued, "and strive, and have faith in our strivings, after this glorious gift of the Almighty, freedom! Time enough to divide the fish, gentlemen, when they are in the net, at present they are out at sea, and the net is still on land; and the boat—the boat is here—here in this bomb."

"The bomb," exclaimed one.

"Utopian bomb," muttered the second.

"It looks hideous—it will not explode," said the third.

"But we must agree and have perfect confidence amongst ourselves, if we wish to do anything great."

"Yes."

"Plausible ideas are all very good in their own place, but time flies and we must have results."

"True."

"But to attain these results, you will allow that the greatest caution must be used."

"Quite right."

"I have founded statesmen in all quarters of Europe. I have wandered through this land for three months and I now say Italy is ripe for freedom. Are not the Pope's bulls becoming daily more noxious to the people? The Austrian rule less and less endurable? And is not Sardinia, sitting yonder basking in the sun of God's free gift, liberty, a most powerful prompter? England is with us."

"And France?" asked one.

"Is a wolf, ready to devour us."

"I believe it."

"Can a tyrant free the enslaved?"

"No, brother patriots, let us join hands and seek for aid from heaven; project after project fails and I also despond. Oh my country, I weep for thee. Would to God, my death throes could send a thrill of energy through thy languid veins, and arouse you to a proper sense of your damnable degradation."

The last speaker's voice cadenced the sounds it uttered artistically, and always made a deep impression on his audience of three; but these three individuals had each a darling idea of his own, which he clung to against all arguments.

To combine these ideas to serve one practical end, was the purpose of the fourth speaker.

You will have noticed that he is desirous of complete confidence to please the first person, that he bewails

the flight of time and the importance of immediate results, to suit the views of the second; and that he urges the necessity of the greatest caution to get *en rapport* with the feelings of the third.

He has, with considerable tact, made each of them see his counterpart in himself—he gradually draws them through the moral world by prayers, and the material world by gains to his own project; and when about to disclose it, when he has brought their attention to the climax, he slides into a desponding strain to chime again with the second party, whose opposition he fears.

This second individual, who was preparing himself to contradict the most convincing reasons, saw that opposition would not now be required since his friend had also succumbed.

As a soldier he was naturally fond of action, and he began to regret that no scheme was to be propounded, that there were to be no hopes of again fighting against the Austrians, whom he hated with an intensity not dreamt of in colder climates. "Then this bomb of his is Utopian after all," he said to himself, "I thought so."

The other two looked at the bomb and then at their companions, but said nothing.

They thought, however, that if the intellectual powers of the fourth speaker could not solve the problem they might well be silent, and silence there was in that room for a few minutes, broken only by the distant noise of a large city, and the deep breathings of these four men.

The second individual who appeared not to like the present quiet, at length said abruptly, "I thought the bomb was to save us."

"Yes, my dear friends," said the fourth speaker, clutching the bomb and rising hastily, "There is still one hope left, but it is too daring."

"We fear nothing but tyranny."

"It hazards life."

"We are ready to die."

"It requires perfect faith."

"Have we not sworn?"

"Swear again—on this cross," said the fourth individual, presenting the hilt of his sword, which glittered in the pale light of that all but dark room, and as each of these four men kissed it a scene was enacted, which M. David would have preferred to "The oath of the Horatii."

"I swear."

"I swear."

"I swear."

"And I, too, swear eternal secrecy—it necessitates the utmost caution."

"Are we not Italians?"

"I know no other way to freedom; it is our final hope. If it fails, I die—if it succeeds, what shall Italy not become? I behold her again, the dear land of ancient days mandating the world."

"And the scheme is—?"

"Draw nearer, nearer still; remember your oaths, the assassination of Napoleon."



XIII.

A City by Night.

AIR reader, do you ever dream? Of course. Of lustrous ornaments, it may be, to bedeck your charming person; of a tall brave man, with so jet black hair, to love you; or of a tiny infant, with sparkling eyes, chubby hands, and rosy lips, that lisp out, "ma."

My friend, Mr. Jarvie, dreamt in the dead of night when everything was still, that he had married his fourth wife, and that the cashier of the Union Bank had placed to his credit five thousand pounds. Not difficult to understand this; it is only Mr. Jarvie's day dream still out of bed. Mr. Jarvie, it is notorious, has made the little money he possesses, by speculating in wives. He wears his third spouse at present, and has his eye on the fourth.

I dream often.

But my dreams, like my hopes, have changed with my youth, and now I would prefer not to dream at all.

Yet I have a peculiar faculty for dreaming which is, to say the least of it, strange.

In visions of the night I have written every word of whole chapters of novels, and remembered the

greater part of them when I awoke, although the scenes were then entirely new to me, and were laid in countries I had never visited.

I have carefully retained the recollection of my night labours, and hope some day to publish a three volume novel, headed "Composed while asleep."

One dreaming thus, would almost believe that the soul shaking itself free from its rickety case, which would have instinct left—and this introduces the theory of clairvoyance—had gone on a night ramble, or that we have had another existence in another land and in another form long ago, and that these scenes, so varied and fanciful, are the past looming vaguely on the present.

But it is not any of these night imaginings I have at present to place before you, it is only a single street.

And the clock's beat warns me that it is time to commence my night march.

Clocks' chimes have volumes of meaning to us, whether they reach our ears in a crowd at noonday, or alone in the silent night. Our fathers and mothers listened to them when we were yet uncradled; they struck the hour of our birth, and they will toll the hour of our death; and our children's children will keep appointments by them, and perhaps we shall hear them in eternity.

The world's greatest and most trifling events are ruled by the time of the day. Shakspeare died at a certain hour; Jack meets Harry at eleven, to have the oysters; the ringing of a clock was the signal the massacre of Saint Bartholomew to begin; a

clock prevented Colonel Gardiner from keeping that appointment with the surgeon's wife. The young lady in the arm-chair said "Yes," in a particular moment when we were terribly excited about something. Gibbon tells us—and how beautifully—what his thoughts were when he finished "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." A minute to three I had a tooth extracted, I was in great pain, but comforted myself with the assurance that as the clock opposite me struck, my suffering would be gone. Time filled Francis II., King of the two Sicilies with dismay, and caused him to evacuate Naples before the approach of the heroic Garibaldi; at six o'clock I tried on a pair of new boots which were too tight, and which raised the corns that have a place on my big and little toes at this present hour.

By the time of the clock men marry, and murder, and commit suicide, and are hanged, and sell old clothes, and larch trees, and advance to the rank of nobles, and recede to the degree of beggars, and cities sink into the bowels of the earth, and at the appointed hour, it is said, this world which we inhabit shall melt with fervent heat, and that at the end of time God shall judge us in eternity.

Numerous pictures of life are chimed out to me by these steeple clocks.

The clock on the church of St. John the Baptist, which dates, it is said, from 412, A.D., strikes ten as we reach the post office, one of the smallest of rooms, where books and newspapers are vended on

one side, and letters distributed on the other on our way down George Street leaving behind us the North Inch, where the battle of the clans took place, described in Sir Walter Scott's "Fair Maid of Perth," and the bridge crossing the Tay, leading to Scone Palace, and Kinnoul Hill, and having before us the houses in High Street, at the other end of George Street, and the County Buildings, facing the river, and erected on the site of the palace, in which the Gowrie conspiracy was enacted.

The first person we meet, is a minister of the gospel, who hiccups something about beer as he enters the post-office, and urges the clerk to look sharp with the bible and psalm book, and assist him on with his gown—quick.

Looking down George Street, the principal street, one is struck with the idea, that the different proprietors had been at variance with each other, and determined to have no house like their neighbours, or that the builders had been drunk, and had stepped with the materials too far back and too much forward to avoid tumbling.

The result is picturesque. The street has the appearance of a lame man going round a corner, and the houses taken separately, look like so many children striving who will make the ugliest face.

The minister is fading away into a low beer, and we pass the monument, in imitation of the Pantheon at
in the same way as a star-fish is like a star, to
Hay Marshall, and the crossing at Bridge Lane.

"Heaven helps those who help themselves," appears to be the motto of that seedy-looking man who runs quietly out of the George Hotel carrying something in his hands and followed, too late, by half-a-dozen waiters, who cry, "Stop thief—police!"

There is no policeman at hand, "As there never is," the waiters said, and the thief knew it, for I saw him a quarter of an hour afterwards coolly going into St. John Street, whistling and examining the stolen property, two top-coats and a white hat.

Such nonchalance ought to be rewarded, so I did not give him up to a policeman, because I could not find one.

An intelligent face, set off with black hair, and a good figure, dressed in fawn, approaches and tells us that the inhabitants of this city are as virtuous as their neighbours.

A certain M. Arouet, generally called Voltaire, on his first visit to England is said to have taken notes of the eccentric people who cut off the tails of horses and the heads of Kings. No doubt Voltaire's notebook was soon filled with curious remarks and odd sketches, but if he were here in George Street, Perth, this evening, I would beg him to devote one little line to Dr. Todd, the tall, ill-dressed, wild looking man, who skulked past me this moment, as if he wished it were possible to walk underneath the street, out of the sight of men.

That tall, stiff, one-idea-man, who marches across the street as if he knew where to go, has attained a

certain position in the city, although he does not possess half the cleverness and ability of Dr. Todd.

Why, the one man is the moral of the other, the bright and dark side of the picture.

One reads dissipation on the one, and on the other sobriety.

Everywhere there are contrasts—the gift of bright intelligence is like all the Almighty's blessings impartially distributed. The shepherd on the hills comforts himself with the philosophy of Plato; Cicero's tact and eloquence you will find in a village millwright; prime ministers exist in coal pits; queens of society do duty as maids of all work, and the man who could overturn our most sacred ideas is a tailor.

Was it the Athenians who exhibited drunk slaves to their children, to make them abhor the vice?

The Perth people take another view of instruction. They make the theatre a private dwelling, and erect another church.

There is no place of amusement in the town; but there are an immense number of illegitimate births.

There is no manufactory of any magnitude in, or near the city, because the magistrates have such a care over the city's water, which sometimes threatens to drown the inhabitants in their dwellings, that they will not part with it without a heavy consideration; and even after agreements are concluded and works got into operation, the sum will be disputed in open court, and every possible obstacle thrown in the mill-owner's path.

“Why don't you go to Dundee? We wish to keep

our air pure and our water clean," their actions seem to say.

And what about work for the inhabitants ?

Six of them, young girls, have just gone by in the guise of prostitutes, and the young men proceed to Glasgow.

But as I am neither the Lord Provost, the City Clerk, nor an eminent solicitor, employed to throw light on their money matters, I hold on my course and reach the Perth Bank, where a bailie tells me that the Perth police have just been pronounced the worst in the empire, by Her Majesty's Inspector, Colonel Kinloch.

Punch proposed, when the sale of the piece of land near the Troffachs was before the public, to set loose a number of poets on Ireland to increase the value of the soil of Erin.

Certainly imaginative writers have much to answer for ; and Sir Walter Scott, already mentioned, and Mr. James who dictated—in how many hours, I wonder?—the "Gowrie conspiracy," are anything but exceptions to the rule.

The bailie says he is off home, and the clock strikes half-past ten.

With its last beat passes us, eating sweetmeats, Mr. Seaton Warwick, a tall, perfumed gentleman, who failed in business, and now lives on his rich relations, and who gossips, and does everything so like a woman, that we imagine he must have crinoline somewhere, and that he keeps a parasol and a small bonnet in his pocket.

And this gentleman with the eye-glasses, curled-up lips, and the usual large stick of the profession (why will knights of the pestle and mortar persist in carrying huge staves and patronizing black cats? paste everywhere!) who bows to the Lord Provost, is said to be one of the most skilful doctors in the town. If you want him in an emergency, you had better send your pedigree with the request, otherwise you run a chance of getting him only to your post mortem examination.

The citizens of Perth would as soon put faith in the warlike propensities of their volunteers, whose valour decreases, we are told, with every suit of uniform, as raise a stone to the memory of a late physician.

Opposite No. 1, George Street, there is a man singing, and of all songs, "Partant pour la Syrie." The old weather beaten man is a Frenchman, and hails from the ancient town of Rouen.

And the crowd laugh at his curious song and strange gestures, yet that man was in the van of the army of the first Napoleon, heard the weird-like Rachel chaunt the *Marfellaife*, and assisted other blouses to barricade the Rue St. Antoine.

What a sermon! the dashing foldier of the first empire, with marshals' batons, and kings' crowns, within reach of those who could take them, the ballad singer of the second.

But the man is not to be pitied, he is a spy.

The Empress of the French visited Perth a month afterwards, and ran about the street I have tried to describe to you this cold November night.



XIV.

Twenty Years After.

A FRENCH NOVEL, IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I

I AM a mystery. I neither know the name of my father nor my mother. I never saw either of them to my own knowledge. No one can tell me who they are or what I am; and the wild looking man who protected me that night—who was he? Now he will be dead. Alone! ah, alone! The present is a thing of dim shape to me. I have no engrossing pursuit: I have never thought on the future—what goal has it for me? and the past comes before my vision like a mirror on which nothing has been portrayed—there were no bright spots on it—no angels' visits—no presents from friends, nor no hits from enemies, and in it I met with no great misfortune. As even and monotonous as a palm shooting skywards, has been the course of my life.

But this cannot continue. The very waves chide me into activity as they storm yonder beach, gaining

year by year an increase to their watery domain. The swallows appear to jeer at me as they fly above my head, and seize their fly. Even the glow-worm is useful, and glows by night. But for me there is nothing but weariness and disgust. The same interiors, landscapes, and men, I have seen for twenty years meet my gaze. How often have I envied the husbandman as he returned homewards at eventide. He had something to live for. He had a share of the earth's joys and sorrows. When I wandered over the meadows by the light of the moon, I have met young men and young women, hand in hand, whispering to each other the delicious tale of love. On the playground by the village school I have watched the children at their games, and wished from my heart the least tithe of their gay, light-hearted happiness was mine. And then in the recesses of the forest, the gun lying on my knee, and my dog sitting by my side, the game bag empty, have I reclined on the moss-covered bank, overhung by the branches of the oak, and mused on my mysterious destiny. Who am I?—what is to be my future fate? Do these monks know the secret of my life?

CHAPTER II.

BUT the monks either knew nothing or would tell me nothing.

This is all they ever made known to me. That it was on a dark stormy night in January, twenty years ago. The wind blew in fitful gusts, as if it were

testing its strength for a final trial. The hail and snow which commenced to descend in the morning still continued to fall. At short intervals flashes of lightning lit up the heavens, and revealed with unpleasant distinctness the old monastery.

The monks of this monastery were retiring to rest after offering up prayers to the Almighty for those that go down to the sea in ships, when the boom of a cannon reached their ears. 'Twas a signal of distress. Their coast was rugged and wild—no harbour near, and no warning beacon. They remembered then of the many ships that have been driven to pieces on these rocks, and of the unnumbered mortals the angry waves had ushered into eternity. They hurried down to the shore. A black mass battling with the storm was revealed to them by flashes of lightning. The repeated boom of the cannon told them it was a ship. It approached nearer and nearer the dangerous rocks with every roll of the waves, and the monks prayed. They screamed, as that terrible cry arose to heaven, from the huge thing which was dashed on the rocks at their feet and disappeared for ever. That amongst the few passengers saved there was a tall man with wild, glaring eyes and red hair, who carried something carefully in his arms. When it was unrolled before the fire they saw it was a child. I was that child. But who was my protector? The monks know not. He must have been rich, for he paid them handsomely to educate me for twenty years.

My education is finished. These twenty years

expire to-night. As I write this sentence the clock strikes eleven. I have still one hour to think. I long to mingle in brilliant society. I long to become noted for something uncommon to men. I long to love—to touch the dress, the hair, the lips—oh, happiness!—of a lady I could call mine—mine own.

But what are the strongest resolutions without actions, and what, alas! are actions but fate.

Fate, that is the word—my fate.

Fickle thing! powerful as a god; pervading all things. Hangs this man and makes him a millionaire; drowns that one and places the other on the throne of an empire. "One shall be taken and the other left." Like the wind is fate, having no regular motion; capricious as a courtesan—wayward as a little child—uncertain as the ocean, on whose bosom men float to the bottom, and there, no doubt, solve these perplexing mysteries about Heaven and God, Hell and the Devil.

CHAPTER III.

TWELVE o'clock.

The twenty years have gone.

A new era of my existence has commenced to roll.

Now I must decide.

But how?

Let this cent act Fate.

I toss it up.

Heads I kill myself; tails I become——

It is tails!

I shall be a grocer!!



XV.

Hotel Reminiscences.

HOTELS I have dwelt in, in different quarters of the world, and innumerable are the men and women, and scenes I have seen in them worthy of printer's ink.

In hotels, I found opportunities of studying certain kinds of life not available elsewhere.

I have been in a hotel when it took fire, because the cook was drunk—when a daring robbery was said to have been committed, but no trace of the guilty party could be discovered, and the landlord, after turning the house inside out and back again, said to me that he thought the gentleman was waiting the arrival of a cheque, and that there should be fixed rates for extraordinary disturbances—when a lady eloped with her husband's friend, the husband's desires being wholly centred in musical boxes—when a young man who could not finish a tragedy hanged himself; and when a child, the pet of us all, fell from the fourth story and was dashed to pieces.

I purpose extracting one or two hotel reminiscences from my note book, and we will begin, if you please, at

ROTTERDAM.

It was in a hotel in this city that one night as I lay in bed thinking of the contrast between night and day, and of the pleasures and business pursued at all hours in so many different guises, and of the multitude of dark crimes done in secret chambers when the sun has gone down and earth has received its funeral shroud for the scene, I heard a rustle of a dress, and a whisper at my second bed-room door, which would not lock; then the noise of the door being cautiously opened, and the indistinct sound of a body crawling towards me; then the noise of my portmanteau, watch, clothes, courier's bag, umbrella—everything being conveyed stealthily out of the room. In a minute the hotel, which before was as quiet as a churchyard at midnight, became full of life, and there arose a great talking in the room below mine.

I got up and examined the room, but they had left me nothing—not even the cigar-case I placed on the mantle-piece before I went to bed.

I summoned a council with myself as to my mode of action under the peculiar circumstances, and debated whether it were better to wait, beat down the door, ring the bell for a glass of Holland gin, or cry “Murder.”

There was no bell—there were objections to the other modes of procedure, so I determined to wait.

I went to bed again, but did not sleep until daylight. It was my first visit to Holland, and I did not know a creature in Rotterdam, nor the hotel in which such curious transactions took place.

In about an hour I heard the noise of feet on the stair; again my door was cautiously opened, and some one crept into the room. I appeared to sleep, and at length I did sleep, and in the morning all my things were in their places, only two drops of grease on the portmanteau, and the cigar-case being placed in the courier's bag, betrayed the tampering they had undergone.

ANTWERP.

I arrived here from Brussels at three o'clock, when the inhabitants of Anvers had dined. "Garçon, what about my dinner?"

"Monsieur can dine at five o'clock—we have another gentleman then," was the reply, and I issued forth to have my first gaze at Ruben's "Descent from the Cross." After taking a walk on the handsome quay, I returned to the hotel, partially changed my dress, and went into the public room.

There was only one person in it, the gentleman who was to dine with me, and whom I had never met before. He had black clothes, his hair was white, he spoke English with a Dutch accent, detested the French and everything bearing the Napoleon stamp, and appeared about sixty-five years of age.

He might have been a dissenting minister, an actor

making a provincial tour, or a traveller for a lace manufactory.

We were in the middle of the soup when the waiter went out of the room for something; the old gentlemen, who had entered into conversation with me, was apparently watching this opportunity, for he dropped his spoon the moment the door was shut, and whispered to me, "Look here, look here."

Out of the depths of his pocket he pulled a small envelope, on which was written in delicate characters, "*Cbriſtina*," and in which was a lock of fair hair.

"The hair of my miſtreſs," he ſaid, and lifted his ſpoon.

EDINBURGH.

It was in a hotel in Princes Street, Edinburgh, I firſt met him.

"Good morning," he ſaid, "This is the twenty-third Sunday after Trinity," and as he ſhook hands with me when I was leaving, he laughed hyſterically, and preſented me with his card, and ſpurred out "Cheap, got one hundred of them from Granger, London, for one-and-fix; copper-plate and everything two-and-two."

I awoke that morning earlier than uſual, expecting to get ſome back volumes of the *Illustrated London News*, which were lying on a ſide-table in the public room, looked over. The volumes were ſtill there, but not a word of them could I get read; he talked inceſſantly in a ſcreaming tone, and with a want of breath, and fits of idiotic laughter, painful to hear.

He changed the topic of conversation every five minutes, and his subjects spread over an immense variety of men and things.

He ended his sentences with a "What think you, sir?" In the middle of an argument he would suddenly stop, and whisper to the person nearest him, "Suppose we subscribe sixpence or a shilling for a bottle of wine," and he prefaced his conversation to strangers who entered the public room with, "I am due at Drummond's at two-and-a-half. Do you think, as I am a minister's son I might send in my card to the vestry and speak a few minutes to the clergyman?"

When he left for church, he said with a laugh at the end, "Good-bye, gentlemen, we must go to the temporal church on earth, until we can get to the spiritual church above. The righteous shall go into everlasting bliss, but the wicked into death eternal. 'Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord.'"

He carried a small library of miscellaneous literature in one pocket, and a bottle of Hanoverian wine, ("Cheap—the wine of the country," he said), and a bottle of Allsop's pale ale in the other. Both were continually at the disposal of all comers.

One night he lost his top-coat, another night his watch, and about two o'clock this (Sunday) morning, he returned to the hotel with the wrong boots. How the change took place he could not tell. His invariable reply to all our questions about them was, "Don't speak about them, or I'll swear."

He had a great deal to say about the golden lectures and ten new sovereigns—the canon of St. Paul's and some thousands a-year—the Oriental Banking Company and five per cent., and about an ass that was no ass. "Balaam's ass," he said, "was no fool."

He enlarged upon asses.

"We kept an ass at Thistlebridge. Do you think, sir, the asses on Hampstead Heath are of the same species? Well, sir, this ass was no ass I can tell you. I got on its back, and it pitched me over its ears; but my sisters used to ride it sideways, I prefer going inside. Christmas," he continued, "Is one of our great festivals. My father said to me, 'John, I shall have three carriage-full that day.' Do you think, sir, the ministers of the Church of England are well paid? Do you think the Pope would like to be the Archbishop of Canterbury. Would he turn, do you think, sir? I wish them all well; there's good people amongst them—what think you, sir? Shall I have time to walk to Leith in time for the sermon? No—thank you—I shall not forget you in this world nor the next. Will you come with me to hear Dean Ramsay, friend? I don't care where I go. Don't you think we could work a bottle of wine? Temperance hotel, Sunday, ah! Get me the money and I will work it."

He walked from end to end of the room as he spoke, he took nothing ill that was said to him, and if you laughed he would laugh too. He was as harmless as an infant, standing six feet in height, apparently well educated, had travelled some distance, and had

the appearance of a gentleman, only his dress was frequently bespattered with mud.

He carried his Bible in a leather case, and he always wrote a letter to his mother deferring his return home for three hours. He had a medal of Napoleon I., in his trousers pocket. "Got it and a valuable snuff-box for ten shillings," he said. "Sent the snuff-box to my friend, the Dean of Kintael."

He recited a long grace before all his meals, and he scarcely ate anything, but he drank a great deal.

When he came from church he exclaimed, "It's a great matter to have an estate. I saw the aristocracy, honest men, and bonny lasses, in church to-day. Will I do for a Christian, a gentleman, and a minister's son?"

His card is—

Mr. Steward Hill.





XVI.

The Haunted and the Haunters;

OR,

THE HOUSE AND THE BRAIN.

BLACKWOOD narrated to us a few months ago a thrilling mystery with this exciting title.

It was about a haunted house in the midst of London, wherein dreadful crimes are supposed to have been committed, and where one of those men who possess all the craftiness of demons and strength of will sufficient to overturn the most sacred customs, pursued his chemical studies—where the sound of feet is continually heard, globules of light of all colors seen flashing from the floor, dark shadows of gigantic monsters, cold as ice and with gleaming eyes, arose and vanished—where a dog goes mad and has its neck broken without any visible agency—where chairs step into the middle of the floor, and doors open and shut seemingly of their own

accord, and where three solemn knocks are periodically heard.

Now I have a profound belief in haunted houses; and if the gentleman who imagined that charming piece of humbug will take the trouble to come down to Inverness some day, I shall have great delight in showing him through my house, which is unmistakeably haunted—haunted day and night by a young lady in a light blue dress, and with clusters of brown curls dancing around her beautifully formed head.

'Twas amongst the wilds of the far west I first beheld her, as I lay by our watch-fire. Nature had all but gone to rest—only a serpent hissed in the grass, or a falcon leaped from the river in the ravine, or a bird whirled up from the trees above our head, or the horses, picketed a short distance off, neighed at some unseen danger. The sky was cloudless, and the moon and stars looked like so many diamonds. My companion slept soundly. It was my turn to watch. We had ridden hard all day, and it was with considerable difficulty I could keep my eyes open. It was necessary that we should be most watchful, for where we crossed the river we saw the trail of Blackfeet on a war march. I put my rifle across my knees, and turned my thoughts homewards, when suddenly down the side of the mountain came a lady dressed in blue, and seated herself by the river. She unloosed her long brown tresses, and allowed them to float in the water as she sang in strains I had hear

long ago in another country, in a little room of a little cottage masked with wall-flowers, "There's no place like home." A jackal howled and the lady in blue disappeared.

I saw her again in a most eventful moment.

Our vessel was attacked by Malay pirates in the vicinity of Borneo. We fought like lions, but were captured and made slaves. I fell to the lot of a grim old villain who treated me worse than his horse, and compelled me once or twice to act as the public executioner. One night I sank down on my mat exhausted with fatigue but unable to sleep. I tossed to and fro. I was very thirsty. My eyes felt as if they were going to start from their sockets. My head burned—I was in a high state of fever. 'Twas three weeks before I recovered, and how I spent these three weeks, God and these villains only know. I was so emaciated, that to walk was a great burden, and my hand could scarcely convey the food to my mouth. They saw I was not fit for work, and they determined to kill me. They held a council as to the manner of death. It was the suggestion of the Malay who owned me that was carried out. They carried me to the top of a tall tree in the middle of the village, and used me as a mark for their arrows. Night set in. Three arrows were sticking in different parts of my body, and birds of prey were shrieking above my head. I gave up all hopes of life and prayed for death. But still I did not wish to die thus. Thoughts became too much for me. Lights

flashed before my eyes. Ravenous birds dashed their beaks into my brain. I laughed hysterically.

"I must exert my will or I shall go mad," I said, and immediately over the trees came my guardian angel, dressed in blue, with her brown hair waving in the breeze, and carrying in her hand a black banner, on which were inscribed in large white letters, Hope. Soon I heard a sound of musketry, and ere midnight, I was rescued by Rajah Brooke.

A third time I beheld her in the little room of the little cottage masked with wall-flowers. A young man was holding her hands, and saying, "Janet, be mine; you are my guardian angel through life, do not desert me now or I shall die. I have lived only for you—have scaled ambitious heights only for you—I love only you—dearest be mine."

"I am certainly haunted," I said to myself as I awoke from a dreamy sleep, such a treasure can never be mine, and all the runnings through, and too happy scenes in these rooms are fancies; but stop, no! that cannot be. There is a young lady nestling by my side, and a little hand in mine; and everywhere, by day and night, in this house of mine, there flits a little lady, dressed in blue, and with a wealth of brown curls.





XVII.

What is Success?



SUCCESS is a wayward thing: it takes up its abode in the most unlikely objects, and is frequently gained by simple, uncommon, and absurd means.

The sermons of Dr. Guthrie are a success, as are also the advertisements of Professor Holloway, and the show speculations of Mr. Barnum.

Cromwell's success was the result of his earnestness, Balfac's on account of his eccentricity, and Napoleon III. was triumphant because he flaunted an eagle, and had an uncle who was ambitious, and knew something about battles.

A name, a word, a look, a touch, a gesture, capture success, and change the whole course of men's lives.

Each of us have our moment of our triumph and hour of defeat, although both may have passed unnoticed.

And apparent triumphs are sometimes real defeats.
And success to one is failure to another.

Our destinies are often decided for us by men who

again are influenced by their superiors. Men's places in life assume the shape of a large organ on which a monkey is attempting to play a tune—the keys are struck at random, and the highest note performs the part of the bass; but the jingle of sounds proceeds, the lucky hits are applauded, and the failures laughed at. The monkey, who is invisible, receives the nickname of *chance*, and as the audience retires from the scene they say to each other, "It is possible to get something good out of this: assuredly there are many false notes, but the true ones, set with proper words, and artistically delivered, might be successful."

Men are not so wise as they are thought to be. If each of us examines his heart, he will find only a few bright spots in a corner, carefully covered over with our passions, which are great obstacles to our purposes.

Man, divesting himself of his passions, becomes fit for a great position and little good; but what necessary sentiments he does not possess, he can feign.

He who acts most is seldom the least successful.

We are changing our ideas about instruction. Is not the suppression of feeling a grand element in our children's education?

"It is unseemly, sir, to expose these nasty opinions of yours in such a manner; why don't you put on a grave face and wrap your thoughts in tinsel? And you should never advance dogmatic things without a I-have-nothing-to-do-with-it sentence, such as, "Some one told me lately," or "I have read somewhere," or "There is a theory existing."

Success in anything makes you new enemies and new friends. If the friends overbalance the enemies, so much the better for you, but if you are independent of both it will be still better; and if you have a weapon of defence more powerful than any your friends or enemies can bring against you, it will be best.

Ruling by affection has many disadvantages. If we wished a person to do a certain thing at a particular time, we would imbue that person with fear.

Man understands commands, but requests never have his immediate attention; they lie over for a day or two, are then pitched out of sight, and soon forgotten.

Few men have climbed the upward path of life eating bon-bons, and saying to the person in advance, "Please, sir, allow me to pass."

It is generally those sarcastic, determined, muscular men, who reach the front, who clear a road for themselves, with a "Get out of the way, you, or I'll kick you," or "You must step aside, I must advance."

To illustrate this—

In a street in Brussels there is a large crowd before the entrance to a church. The king is inside distributing prizes and none are admitted without tickets; we had no ticket, so we content ourselves with watching the efforts of those who have them to get through the crowd. A boy is laughed at and allowed to enter. An old woman is pushed forward with a smile. An officer with numerous decorations cannot find a way, and has to return a quarter of a mile and go in by

a side door. The crowd notice his re-appearance on the other side and cry, "Oh, oh! here he is." Now comes a gentleman in brilliant costume and unnecessary jewellery, who holds his scented napkin to his nose and politely requests the crowd to allow him to pass. There was a laugh, then, "Not likely, are we to lose a good position for you?" This gentleman did not know of the side door, and retires to his carriage in disgust. But here is a man approaching in a quiet dress, with red hair, and bold eyes, who saunters through the crowd leisurely, and enters the church without a single criticism being passed on him. The crowd cleared a way for him and said nothing, because they saw the man was determined to pass, and because they feared him. He is the minister of police.

To adapt yourself to all kinds of opinions to gain your end, is one way of succeeding; to hold firmly to fixed ideas, is another, and the most respectable of the two.

Success assumes different forms in different minds; one man is not contented with his neighbour's ambition.

Napoleon wanted to rule a European Empire, and Canova to chip marble elegantly, and Liszt only desires to master the piano, and Jules Janin to be a member of the French Institute.





XVIII.

A Railway Collision.

I AM at a railway station waiting for the up mail to London. The train is late, the waiting-room is crowded with passengers, who are conjecturing all kinds of accidents, and perpetually asking the telegraph boy, "What is it?" who shakes his instrument wildly for a minute or two and then gasps out, as if he expected to be transported for life, or dunted on the head with the passengers' sticks and umbrellas for avowing it, "No use—wires broken down."

The passengers, who contented themselves before with supposition now announce fact, with the preliminary remark, "terrible railway collision;" and, indeed, all the ladies, and gentlemen, and children begin to think that trains are not so punctual after all, and that they have, like other establishments, a good deal of puffery about them; and as for the telegraph, which might have explained the delay, they condemned it literally, "What right had it to break down. Humph—too much of its own will—ought to

be put on bread and water for a day or two, or drawn over the coals to teach it manners."

The Station-master, a big, jovial creature, is seized by a very little old lady as he tries to steal out by a side door, much too small for him, and being pushed into the middle of the passengers, who encircle him, and seem determined to retain him as a hostage for their safe and speedy transit, is questioned thus:—

"What is the reason of all this, Station-master? I shall appeal to the *Times*. I have appointments which must be kept. Where is the train?" said a nervous looking young man—his face is covered with black hair, and he has at his side a courier's bag containing Tennyson's "*Idylls*," some sausage-sandwiches, and a pint of sherry—evidently a literary gentleman.

Station-master—"She will wait on you immediately, sir: our line, like other roads through life, is sometimes slippery."

Literary gentleman—"Ah! I understand," which no one else appeared to do, and he began a sandwich and the reading of the third "*Idyll*." He was a methodical young man, for at the end of every second page he tasted his sherry, which, by the rule of time and consumption, was exhausted before the train reached the station.

A tall man enveloped in cloaks, next spoke.

"Do you know what is wrong?" he said.

Station-master—"Nothing, sir, nothing only bad rails."

Tall gentleman — “Then why is the telegraph down?”

This puzzled the Station-master for a moment, and all of us saw his hesitation, and consequently dreaded the worst, and those passengers who had predicted a collision, now came into notice, and were much consulted upon railway accidents in general and this one in particular, for all of us at this time concluded that there must be an accident.

The Station-master, who knew more than he would tell, recovered himself, “The telegraph, sir, is a perfect nuisance—always going wrong and detaining the trains. Cold weather this. Found a blackbird dead in my garden this morning. I pity the poor, who have no place to shelter them on a night like this, and no blazing fire, as we have here,” and he poked vehemently at the fire for a minute or two, and then endeavoured to escape. But a young lady with a black turban hat and a white feather, who said she was waiting for some one—(that some one of a young lady is generally a lover)—caught him by the arm, and holding up an anxious face with the least sign of tears, asked, “Do you think there is an accident?”

“No—nonsense; you shall hear her coming puffing through the bridge in a second,” replied the Station-master, who had vainly striven to get quit of the ladies’ examination.

As he spoke, the noise of a train was heard, and we all ran out and found it was a down train, and as it rushes past, a number of men, standing

spade in hand, on goods wagons, are seen by the imperfect light of the station lamps.

"What is that?" inquired the old gentleman in the Turks head-dress, who let out that he knew everything about railways, from the cutting of the first sod and the laying of the first sleeper, to the economical working of plant and a dividend of ten per cent. "What is that? Why there must be something wrong. Are not these platelayers?"

The Station-master was gone, there was no sign of our train, and as the night was extremely cold, we returned to the waiting-room with the young lady in the turban, who sat down in a corner and commenced to cry.

"Half-past six o'clock," exclaimed a fierce looking gentleman, who had his face shaved clean, and wore a horn eye-glass round his neck, "I take you witnesses gentlemen, it is half-past six. I have to deliver a lecture to-night at eight, and there is no telegraph—confound it."

"Awkward, rather, haw," lisped out a young gentleman, who, speaking about time, referred to the clock at the Horse Guards.

The telegraph boy chastised his instrument for a few seconds and then took it to pieces and rang a bell. Two old ladies whispered to each other, "Oh, dear," the young lady in the turban hat gave a sob, and the gentlemen all coughed and looked into the fire; and no sound broke the quiet, but the cold wind whistling through the bridge and the flickering of the gas.

"Can I get a special train to London?" asked the lecturer.

"For thirty-five pounds," was the reply.

There was no more word of the special train.

The literary gentleman has drank his last drop of sherry, and gone to sleep; the young lady keeps in a corner and holds her handkerchief to her face, her little dog which is lying on her dress, looks around it fiercely, as if it thought some one present was causing its mistress to grieve; the exquisite from the Horse Guards contents himself with the delay, as there is a pretty woman present. He would have volunteered to make a party to search for the train, if the young lady would join it; he would have ventured nearer the young lady, but that brute of a dog seems determined to have her all to itself. "Haw! she weeps—a rustic," he said to himself, and selecting a nice place lay down with a fur cloak wrapped round him.

The lecturer was not inclined to rest—he read innumerable notes which he took from his hat—rehearsed his lecture mentally, not even omitting the frequent applause of the audience, then pictured to himself their various disappointments and guessed their surmises at his non-appearance, and held a council with his conscience and his cupidity, about asking the company for two hundred pounds for breach of contract. He concluded with, "I have my ticket—it is now five minutes to seven." The four old ladies could not talk much, but they thought a great deal and gazed steadfastly at the ceiling. The tall man

enveloped in cloaks is a director of the railway, but he takes care to keep that a secret and to say as little as possible. As for the old gentleman who wears the Turk's head-dress and knows all about the construction of railways, he only said, "Who would have thought it?" and then whistled. A little girl nicely dressed, who appeared to belong to no one in particular, after pulling straight the fair, wiry curls (false) of the old woman and making the dog bark, sat down at the feet of the gentleman from the Horse Guards, who opened his eyes and looked at her, and gave her a bit of his cloak, and muttered something like, "Off."

The child said, what I took to be "Pa."

Half-past seven and no word of the train—was thinking of securing a bed somewhere, when the telegraph boy, who had been again thrashing his instrument, jumped into the waiting-room and exclaimed, "The wires are connected."

Now for the particulars of the accident, we said, and we all went hastily into the telegraph office; the lady in the black turban with the white feather first.

The telegraph boy who says he is just going to take a message, sits on a high stool before the usual two-dialed instrument, and we, the passengers, flock round him.

He reads aloud—

"Your father is gone, come quickly."

"Killed?" asked one.

"No connection with the train."

"I think you had better see where the train is," said the tall gentleman.

"Immediately, sir, there are only two other messages."

The next message was—

"I will take two thousand five hundred pounds."

And the third—

"Mrs. Simpson, Manchester, to Miss Emily Deveul."

"That is I," said the young lady in the turban.

"Oh, quick."

"Do not expect Frank—the wretch, he went off to London yesterday with Jane Edwards, and was married."

"Married," said the young lady in a feeble voice, "Married, not married," and fainted.

The train, which ran over a drove of cattle, has arrived, and we hurry out to abuse the guard and take our respective places.

The old ladies, ever ready with their consolation, were beginning to condole with the young lady in the turban, who left the station before the train reached it, as she did not now expect that some one; but she stopped them by saying, "I shall have compensation."





XIX.

Satan in Council.

ALLEN from his high estate, yet still exalted, the monarch of Hell sits on the throne of the world, and myriads of beings worship the once prime minister of God.

We behold his influence everywhere, and in the wisest of men.

He kisses the lips of beauty, and does anything but stay the hand of the murderer.

He sits in council at the boards of kings, and takes part in the "Cottager's Saturday night," and is powerful in the dance.

He bends his whisper to the ear of that child, and mounts these pulpit stairs; and away in the East you find him kneeling on a cushion, beating his breast and crying, "Allah! Allah!"

He has business with the Grand Llama of Tartary; he delights to smoke opium; he is fond of wine, and will stand any amount of brandy.

He patents innumerable machines, and is author of

a million volumes; and in the midst of cities he amuses himself by laying out pleasure gardens.

He grows tulips and paints ladies, and wears false hair.

His eyes' glitter conquers the strongest virtue; his tongue's sound creates a hell in paradise; his form's magnificence breaks all the commandments; and all these combined create intellect a god, with the motto, "*Onward—evil, be thou my good!*"

You will meet him in a railway carriage smoking a cigar (he cares nothing for regulations), and yonder in the laboratory, in search of the essence of life and the philosopher's stone, and there amongst the flowers by the river's side, and here in this shop felling a pound of fugar; he presides always over gin-palaces, he watches narrowly the progress of the seething malt; and he has an eye on the growing crops, the fish in the sea, the gold in the earth, and the birds in the air.

He bets largely at the Derby, and you will see him in a close carriage visiting his aristocratic patients; he has a gaming-table at Baden-Baden, and sometimes he fights a duel.

He seems to have invitations to all marriages, the contracts of which he knows by heart; he comes unasked to your death, and greatly disturbs your philosophy; at births he comforts the mother with the death of her child.

He counts his gold with the miser, and steals a handkerchief in the street, and poisons his wife and

sleeps with his own daughter, and pierces his father's brain with a silver needle.

He commands armies and is great at the bar, and his speeches have always the closest attention of the House of Commons, and his bills pass unquestioned through the Lords, and invariably receive the sanction of her Majesty.

He rides in the storms, and a ship is wrecked; he flies with the lightning, and a man is struck dead; he howls with the earthquake, and whole cities disappear for ever; he hisses in the wind, and this young gentleman curses the diety for retarding the progress of his pleasure-yacht; and over there in that city by the banks of the Arno, Florence, he was in council with Machiavelli; and he has always a hand in the bulls issued from the Vatican.

Did he not conduct the researches of Zoroaster? and from whom did the inspiration of Mahomet come? and who cracked jests and wrote satire with Voltaire? and who but he glossed the sophistry of Rousseau?

Nothing appears too great or too small for his ambition.

He teaches the children the alphabet, and sells milk, and mixes coffee with chicory without the necessary notice, and establishes societies with unlimited liability, and acts high tragedy and low comedy.

He imitates successfully Rowland's Macassar oil, the Glenfield patent starch, and the signature of Coutts and Company.

He keeps duplicate pass-books in banks, and sells false shares on railways, and assassinates forty men to make more oil, and he steps readily into a naked statue, and he sits ravishingly beautiful (as Lord Haddo is aware) as a model to a painter, and he reads French novels, and frequents the dancing-saloons of Rotterdam, and jumps to his purpose in a telegram, and buries you alive.

He travels by the overland route to India—he has doubled the Cape—he has been seen at the North Pole—he has gone up in balloons, and he crosses rivers on tight ropes; and he has something to do at present with the Isthmus of Suez.

In the past, the present, and the future; in heaven, hell, and this globe, his never ceasing cry has been, and will be, "*Onward—evil, be thou my good.*"

FINIS.









